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PEASANTS ON THE MARCH

Etna is not the only erupting point in Italy. The political crust which Signor De Gasperi has tried to set and harden in the joint interests of industrial monopolists, absentee landlords, the Marshall Aid administrator and the Vatican, is being burst open. And the eruption comes, not from organised industrial labour in the North, but from starving peasants whose immemorial hunger for land is now greater than their respect for the State or their fear of the Church.

The background and significance of this peasant uprising in the South—in Calabria and Sicily, where the problem is complicated by the role of the Mafia—are described by Mr. Basil Davidson in an important series of despatches whose publication we began last week. Since our correspondent wrote, the movement to occupy and plough the great landlords' undeveloped estates is spreading rapidly northwards. By last week-end, it had reached the area round Foggia. In that district, as in Calabria, there have been "incidents." Following an attempt by the police to disperse peasant demonstrators at San Severo, angry crowds gathered outside the Camera del Lavoro in Torre Maggiore. The police opened fire under circumstances which have yet to be made clear. As in the case of the shooting at Melissa, described by Mr. Davidson last week, the "usual inquiry" is being held by Signor Scelba. In *post facto* justification for firing, the police claim that they found a hand-grenade and some rounds of pistol ammunition lying about when the crowd scattered, leaving its dead and wounded on the ground.

As a protest against the action of the police at Torre Maggiore, a one-day general strike (reportedly incomplete but apparently effective in the North and generally in transport) was called by the Trade Union Federation (C.G.I.L.); but meanwhile the peasant movement had begun to approach Rome. In Latium, the squatters have taken over several estates belonging to princely landlords, such as Prince Doria and Prince Torlonia; and, though there are reports of numerous arrests, there has so far been no more shooting. At last the Government seems to be awakening to the fact that there can be no defence of the feudal landlordism of the South. What else can be expected but an uprising when, out of the 1,300,000 acres forming the province of Rome, nearly 500,000 acres are still held by 90 owners, and when it is admitted that, in the Foggia district, landless agricultural labourers have been getting only twelve days' work a month? In the conditions of "hunger, despair and lingering death" described by Mr. Davidson, there is little need to seek for the Communist agitator. If Communists are grasping the leadership of this peasant revolt, that is the fault of others who have had power to reform and have not used it.

Belatedly, the landlords and their Government are trying partly to forestall and partly to appease the peasants. Cultivation by hired labour is being hurriedly begun on estates long left derelict as game preserves. The promise is made that steps will be taken to speed up the work of the provincial councils which exist to adjudicate on claims that land demanded by peasant co-operatives shall be compulsorily acquired. A Bill to alienate (with generous compensation) 100,000 acres of Calabrian *latifondi* for redistribution to landless agricultural workers has been presented in the Senate. Whether this death-bed repentance will be sufficient to impress the peasants remains to be seen. They have every reason to distrust the landlords and little reason to trust a Government which, ever since its victory last year, has connived at the eviction of peasants even from land which they had begun to cultivate and which the Government had pledged itself to allow them to keep. So far, these seizures of land by peasants are mainly the result of hunger, poverty and misery. They are not yet fully political. Unless the Government institutes, very speedily indeed, a far more drastic land reform than it shows signs of doing—unless, in fact, it turns against the big landowners who support it—this revolt may soon become a revolution. The political crust in Italy is thin.

The New International

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, which has been finally set up this week, is in danger of being turned into an anti-Communist crusade rather than an effective rallying point for the forces of democratic trade unionism. This, no doubt, suits both the Americans —at any rate the A.F. of L.—and the Christian Trade Unions, whose spokesmen at the Conference have so far been the French. It is likely, however, to stand seriously in the way of the Confederation's success in wooing the Trade Unions of the less developed countries, including the colonies, away from the W.F.T.U; and the fate of a number of Belgian amendments to the draft constitution also shows that it involves a deplorable debasement of the principles on which the new Confederation is to be based. References to a classless society, to the abolition of the wage system, and to the participation of the workers in the control of industry were successively eliminated in response to American objections; and even references to world economic co-ordination and planning met with the same fate. In recording its opposition to totalitarianism in all its forms, the Conference leant over backwards in proclaiming the Trade Unions' entire independence of the State; and it inserted in the constitution strong words, inspired by the A.F. of L., pledging it to make war against Communist infiltration and "anti-labour forces." It was to be expected, in view of the quarrel with the W.F.T.U., that the Confederation should set out to fight the Communists in the Trade Unions; but it would surely have been better, in doing this, to leave the way open for co-operation, where it is possible, with Unions at present attached to the W.F.T.U., and to keep the slogans of anti-Communist militancy out of the constitution.

Catholics, Colonies and Migrants

One big problem before the Conference has been that of its relations with the Christian Trade Unions, which have at present their own separate International. At the outset, the Christian Centres in the various countries were invited only when the main Centres in these countries agreed to their attendance—which meant, in practice, only in France. Subsequently, however, it was agreed to invite them all to come in, on condition of their accepting the liquidation of their separate International within two years. If they agree to these terms, their presence, together with that of the A.F. of L., will mean the permanent existence of a powerful anti-Socialist bloc within the new Confederation. Another problem is that of the colonial delegations, who contended strongly that it would be impracticable to wean colonial labour from supporting the Communist W.F.T.U. unless effective action were taken to raise standards of living rapidly in the colonial countries. The Confederation, with its associated Trade Secretariats, claims to have already an affiliated membership of more than fifty million, drawn from 53 countries and organised in 59 national Centres. It is to set up regional machinery, on lines not yet decided. An Italian resolution, pledging the affiliated bodies not to put obstacles in the way of labour migration between countries except in face of a local unemployment crisis was defeated by 52 votes to 21. No other result could have been expected; for what country likely to receive such migrants is prepared to let them in without check? The difficulty of this American-dominated Confederation will be to discuss anything, except hostility to Communism, on which its very diverse elements can hope to agree.

German Rearmament

It is satisfactory to note that the public reaction in Germany to alarmist versions of the interview given by Dr. Adenauer to an American newspaper was one of real concern lest the Western German Republic should already be committed to recruiting a new Wehrmacht. What the Chancellor appears, in fact, to have said is that Western Germany, confronted with vast tasks of rebuilding, had something better to do than to put its young men back into uniform, and that the defence of Western Germany was "the moral and legal duty" of the occupying Powers. If, however, the Allies insisted that Western Germany should contribute forces to the Atlantic defence scheme, then Germans would be entitled to refuse to serve as mercenaries under foreign commanders; any German contingent would have to be established under its own commanders and on the responsibility of the West German Government. Given Dr. Adenauer's hypothesis, his statement is unexceptionable. The real question is whether the existence of an East-West frontier drawn across Germany and across Europe is going to lead to a situation in which the United States, anxious to obviate the need for its own young men to serve abroad, will see in armed German forces an essential factor in strategic planning aimed at containing the Soviet Union. Failing agreement between the U.S.S.R. and the West on the future of a unified Germany, it is only too likely that the gradual drift of American opinion will be in favour of according some degree of armed strength to Western Germany as the most "reliable" element militarily in Western Union.

The New Zealand Elections

The defeat of the Labour Government in New Zealand was, in part, the product of a change in the economic climate. The depression of the 'Thirties, which hit agricultural countries particularly hard, carried Labour into power on a programme of *dirigisme*—economic planning, guaranteed prices, minimum wages and social welfare—which appealed even to the conservative farming community as a promise of security. In a world compelled, since the war, to pay dearly for agricultural products, prosperous New Zealand has had time to forget the fears which led it to want a New Deal in 1935. Moreover, since the death, in 1940, of Mr. Savage, the Labour Party has had no dynamic personality in its generally ageing leadership. But there was clearly more to it than that in the election. The National Party, exploiting popular discontent at "controls" and shortages—as the Tories are doing here—made specious promises (whose fulfilment is much in question) that it would reduce taxation, subsidise private house-building and gradually get rid of price regulation, as well as de-nationalising the commercial air lines. But Mr. Holland and his supporters were emphatic that they would leave untouched the social services which Labour had built up; and, beyond the claim that it would promote full employment more effectively than the Nationalists, Labour put forward no arresting alternative to Nationalist policy. Essentially it asked for a mandate to mark time on its ground. Thus the contest became one between a Labour Party, with hardened arteries, which had abandoned much of its faith in Socialism, and a National Party whose advocacy of free-enterprise included unqualified adherence to the concept of the Welfare State In these circumstances the political pendulum swings in a vacuum.

Transport Losses

The deadly flatness of last week's debate on the Transport Commission's Report proved one thing at least—that the Opposition was quite unable to sustain in the House of Commons the press campaign about "£20 million losses due to nationalisation." If any further evidence were needed to disprove this assertion, it is to be found in the fact that, in 1947, the last year before nationalisation, the railways showed a deficit of more than £16 million *before* meeting any stockholders' claims, whereas the Transport Commission's deficit is a net loss *after* payment of the £30 million annual burden of compensation charges. Indeed it would be considerably greater, were it not for the large profits earned by nationlised road haulage. The real charge against the Government is very different. In the first place, it decided to nationalise too early. If it had waited until this year, two of the main lines at least would probably have been in the receiver's hands and compensation correspondingly reduced. In the second place, it aggravated the Commission's problem by compromising on the issue of "C" licences and failing to take over all buses along with the railways, docks and road haulage. This failure made it impossible to achieve a sensible co-ordination of rail and road passenger charges. What is needed is to stabilise railway fares while sharply increasing those of road passenger transport. The unbalance between road and rail was still further increased when the Chancellor missed his opportunity, in the autumn budget of 1948, to increase the price of petrol along with that of cigarettes. Petrol is as wasteful a dollar consumer as tobacco; and, with cigarettes at 3s. 6d. for twenty, it would not have been unreasonable to make petrol 4s. 6d. a gallon—approximately its price in France and Switzerland. By failing to do any of these things, the Government has left the railways in an even worse position than that in which they found themselves before the war, when they started their campaign for a Square Deal.

A Timid Report

The Plant Committee, which has been investigating the distribution and exhibition of films, has turned in a timid Report. It encountered much the same difficulties as the Gater Committee on film costs, which reported last week, in securing adequate information and rightly complains that the film industry is poorly served with statistics. Sir Arnold Plant and his colleagues criticise, as the Palache Report did in 1944, the monopoly conditions in the industry, but the criticism is very mild and the proposals for coping with monopoly are even milder. Mr. Rank should be pleased with this Report. It endorses his recent claim that the burden of taxation is too heavy for the film industry to bear; it says, in effect, that this is no time to impose a severance of production and distribution interests; and it dismisses nationalisation as highly unsuitable, though this dismissal is directed at nationalisation in principle, not to the limited and specific suggestion that the State should acquire a theatre circuit and take over idle studio space. This Report certainly contains much useful information, but its general tenor and the recommendations that it makes both suggest that the Committee members wished to disturb existing arrangements as little as possible. Their proposals, therefore, would mainly tinker with details, such as Sunday programmes, pre-release runs of new films, marketing arrangements and competitive bidding by exhibitors for first features. Such ideas are important, but it would be an optimist who would believe that they could make a material difference to an industry which is out of balance, inefficient and appallingly organised. Mr. Wilson should not be misled by Sir Arnold Plant's faith in *laissez-faire*. The film industry needs reconstruction, not relief.

The Engineers' Claim

It is natural for the engineering Trade Unions to resent the prospect of the already huge profits of the engineering industry being further swollen by devaluation while they are prevented from securing any increase in wages. Nevertheless, the contention that the industry can easily afford to pay higher wages out of surplus profits is questionable. Under existing conditions it is indispensable, if inflation is to be avoided, to mop up the greater part of these profits either by taxation or by appropriation to reserves destined for capital investment. That the ownership of these increased profits should accrue to the shareholders of the companies which have to be allowed to make them is a social injustice, which ought to be put right by means of a levy on capital. But to pay them out in wages would upset the precarious balance of the economy by a creation of additional consuming power. It would restrict exports by increasing home demand; and it would be impossible to prevent the spread of the higher wages to other industries in which the workers have an equally good claim. What the engineers have a right to demand is a moderrate readjustment in cases where wages are below a living minimum, *plus* a tougher handling of excessive profits, including both dividend distribution and reserves. Their persistence in their wage-claim has, however, the merit of focussing attention on the anomaly that one effect of devaluation will be to swell profits yet further for those firms which are in a position to charge higher sterling prices in hard-currency markets.

Hopkins and Uranium

It has always been difficult to distinguish fact from fancy in the proceedings of the U.S. Un-American Activities Committee. After lying doggo for some months—during which its last chairman, Representative Parnell Thomas, has admitted in court to pay-roll frauds—it is again hitting the headlines with a story of uranium and heavy water sold to the Soviet Union in 1943. How much there is to these allegations, it is impossible now to judge. Mr. Fulton Lewis, Jr., the news commentator who has sponsored this tale, has been one of the most frenzied critics of the New Deal, and naturally is delighted to impugn the late Harry Hopkins, the living Henry Wallace, and anyone else in the Roosevelt official family. All this is part of a general campaign to discredit New Dealers as Communist stooges. So far, there is no evidence to show that Harry Hopkins was responsible for such shipments, even if they took place. It is claimed, however, that two of the alleged shipments were made after a ban had been placed on uranium exports, and that vital documents on atomic development were also sent to the U.S.S.R. All this ties in with recent assertions by members of Congress that Russia was able to develop its bomb—now known to have contained a plutonium charge—by using secrets secured from the United States—though the published Smythe Report would have given enough guidance to Soviet scientists. *Posthoc,* the shipment of uranium (puzzling, if it occurred, because the U.S.S.R. has its own resources) has thus become an offence. Before long, we shall hear claims that all Lend-lease to Russia was a criminal outrage on American security. In the light of later developments, it might be thought foolish to make such shipments, if any were made. But in 1943 the Big Three were allies, and it was Russia that destroyed the German armies.

Canada's Constitution

All the Canadian Provinces have now accepted Prime Minister St. Laurent's invitation to a conference on January 10th, to discuss Dominion Provincial relations. The Federal Government has already gone ahead with the Bill making the Supreme Court, rather than the Privy Council, the final court of appeal, and the Bill proclaiming Canada's sole right to amend its own Constitution. Both these objectives are disputed by Quebec. The conference will deal with such problems as the extent to which the Federal Government will finance and set standards in education, taxation, health insurance and pensions. The Quebec Government will argue that the British North American Act is a contract, and not a law liable to revision. Premier Duplessis of Quebec has broken up two such conferences in the past, held by Mackenzie King, but is doubtful whether he can do it again. The decision to call the conference, however, has brought out into the open many latent disputes about the Constitution, nearly a century old. Some people want a constitutional convention. Some would like a statutory Bill of Rights, which Canada has never had. Others want reforms in the machinery of government. Quebec, especially, desires a clearer definition of its language and other national rights in civil law and education. This conference opens all these questions: but it is unlikely to settle any of them. A new balance between Dominion and Provincial powers will be hard to strike.

"Middle Dominion" Deferred

From a speech made, last week-end, by Sir Godfrey Huggins, Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, it would seem that the movement to federate the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland in an African "Middle Dominion" is to be temporarily abandoned by its White supporters. According to Sir Godfrey, a "complete deadlock" is created by the British Government's insistence that there would have to be representation of Africans by Africans in the Federation. In his opinion, "there are not yet enough civilised Natives to justify one constituency." Although the Southern Rhodesian Prime Minister added that he accepted "the ultimate participation of Africans in the Central Government," the reason he has given for pigeon-holing his scheme makes it clearer than ever that the aim of the Federalists has been essentially to draw on the cheap Native labour of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. The problem of developing the lands reserved for Natives remains, of course, to be solved: both in Central Africa and, further North, in Kenya and Tanganyika, soil erosion and feckless agricultural methods are making the Reserves increasingly inadequate to sustain their growing Black populations. Economically, there is something to be said for a federal structure both in Central and East Africa. But until more Africans have become "civilised"—and this demands not so much bookish education as a general raising of the standard of life—suggested schemes of federation are decidedly premature. The White domination for which Sir Godfrey Huggins stands cannot be tolerated—least of all where Britain has jurisdiction.

"Uniscan"

If there are to be further "regional groups" in Western Europe, there is obviously much to be said in favour of a British-Scandinavian arrangement. Outside this country, the Scandinavians are now practically alone in having a partially planned economy, in the British sense. Moreover, there are close trade connections between Great Britain and all the Scandinavian countries, and their economies are much more complementary with ours than those of the rest of Western Europe. Holland, in many respects, would be better suited in such a group than as a constituent of either Benelux or the proposed wider Fritalux grouping; the question is, are the Dutch too far committed for a transfer of allegiance to be practical politics? Another question is how Western Germany is meant to fit in to the projected regional structure. The Swedes have a tradition of active trade with Western Germany; but the extension of a British-Scandinavian group to include the Germans would produce a very unbalanced regional unit and would react unfavourably on British industry. It would also give rise to currency difficulties very much greater than are involved in an arrangement between Great Britain and the Scandinavian States, already partly within the sterling group.

PARLIAMENT: Preoccupations

Wednesday.

THE House is thinner than it used to be, more subdued. A bare spatter of Tory Members listened to the Transport Debate, the second great issue of nationalisation discussed this year. No blood flowed. Assembling from their other activities to hear Jim Callaghan's mellow summing-up of the merits of integration (jargon-of-the-year-word), they quietly voted as though their minds were on other things.

What is it that so distracts Members in Parliament's decline? *Ca va sans dire* (as Winterton said the other day in the belief that he was quoting), the Commons have lost their *fougue.* Where, for example, are the rebels who defied their benevolent Whips, where the abstainers and the eccentrics? Empty benches on Tuesday showed that some were in their constituencies defending the Government; and even their Archimandrite in a salmon-pink tie rose solemnly from his dreams of next year's rebellions to ask a complaisant "supplementary."

Members, it can now be disclosed, have their minds on the General Election. Gone are the spacious days of the monthly or fortnightly visit to the constituency. Once and even twice a week is almost a rule. And the bleary eyes, the pallid faces and the trembling lips are the result of over-indulgence in electioneering. But it isn't only in streets and windswept schools that the campaign goes on. Where there is no legislation, there must be electioneering.

Look at the questions that provoke most interest. Bing's question to the Attorney-General on Big Business expenditure for electoral purposes made dim attention flicker into bright concern. Between the two main political parties, the situation now is "Guns on the table." Any move towards special advantage brings a counter-move, so that when Labour Members shout "sugar-bags," the Tories answer "Co-ops." The Attorney-General didn't clarify the matter of election expenses, except to warn the Parties with judicial detachment that extraordinary campaigning might rank as electoral costs.

What about income tax on "moneys used by industrial companies for political campaigns"? Palmer was reassured by the Chancellor. They *would* pay income tax; he *could* isolate the expenses. So far in the dispute between the supporters and opponents of those who want by advertisement to sell their politics rather than their products, Labour has the initiative. The typical Tory reply—and an indication of how the Tories visualise the electorate—came from Harvey, who wanted to know whether carrots will figure in the election expenses of the Labour Party. This wan jest represents the lassitude of debate in the Commons. Even Lindgren's statement on behalf of Lord Pakenham about the air-crash couldn't rouse anything like the same attention as the Minister's own explanation in the Lords. Passion, for the moment, is reserved for the Peers.

The Commons go about their day-to-day business. Here they vote the Justices of the Peace Bill; there, at the end of Questions, the highly regarded Commander Powell of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, charged with undue lobbying, becomes a "certain Mr. Powell." Compared with the major Acts of the legislative machine, these decisions, so fateful to individuals, seem minor, even to Members.

They seem minor, too, compared with their constituents' view of themselves. The Order Paper bourgeons daily with "constituency" questions that disclose the Member's solicitude. It raises a nice point between Members of *meum and tuum.* Does an M.P. own the principles that affect his constituents, as well as their particular problems? For example, Blackburn the other day "told off" his Birmingham colleague Wyatt on the floor of the House as unqualified to describe the state of mind of his, Blackburn's, Austin motor works' constituents. The Minister of Supply agreed that, contrary to what Lord of Austin's had suggested, a deal with France for the sale and purchase of steel had on balance benefited Britain. Up popped Blackburn to pat Lord on the back for being right on a detail of the transaction when the Minister was wrong. "What's he up to?" asked some. The answer was, "Lord only knows."

MAURICE EDELMAN

THE PUBLIC OPINION FREEZE

Ever since the ignominious defeat of Dr. Gallup by Mr. Truman just a year ago, it has been the fashion, particularly in Socialist circles, to dismiss the Public Opinion Poll as a guide to election results. It is seldom observed, however, that the cause of Dr. Gallup's discomfiture was not any miscalculation in the figures available, but a sudden forward surge of the Democratic Party which brought hundreds of thousands of non-voters to the poll after the pollsters made their last count. Fewer luke-warm Democrats failed to vote than Dr. Gallup had reckoned in making allowances for "abstentions." In fact, an unexpected dynamic element upset the static calculations of the Public Opinion Polls.

In applying this lesson to conditions in this country, we are struck by one fact. At present, though there is a clear anti-Government swing, there is no enthusiasm for a Churchill administration. Only 52 per cent. of the population—23 per cent. Conservatives and 29 per cent. Labour—are convinced Party men. The remaining 48 per cent., of whom exactly half explicitly want a Coalition, are discontented with Party politics and will be inclined, if they vote at all, to vote *against* the Socialists or the Tories rather than *for* anything positive at all. What these figures show is that there is no dynamic in the leadership of either Party at present—nothing, in fact, to upset Dr. Gallup's calculations. If the Government is very much on the defensive about the cost of living, so is the Opposition about unemployment. Instead of manœuvring for a knock-out, two tired and rather elderly heavyweights have found it safer to take refuge in a clinch—and the spectators, who expected a good fight, are losing interest.

How is it that a Labour Government, which came to power on one of those rare historic shifts of public opinion, has lost its impetus in less than five years? Partly, no doubt, this is due to the growing realisation that our future as a country depends so much on external factors—electoral mandates now count less than Marshall Aid; partly to the fact that transfer to public ownership of half a dozen public industries and the extension of social security are now seen to be quite inadequate measures for achieving the revolution in social and human relations which Socialism has always meant to the Labour Movement. Although most of the legislation which the present Labour Party leadership ever envisaged has been passed, the rank-and-file discovers that the structure of society and industrial relations remains almost unaltered. There are still privileged and unprivileged, masters and men, rich and poor; and, though unemployment has been prevented and the position of the trade unions enormously strengthened, no great advance has been made towards social equality. Not only wages, but the whole social structure has been frozen in a posture which frustrates the driving force of either capitalist or Socialist incentives. Consciously or unconsciously, millions of voters feel: "This freeze is unnatural and cannot last; either we go forward with a new dynamic or we must revert to the old system, whatever its defects."

But when they look to Mr. Attlee and Mr. Churchill for downright statements of the two alternatives, the voters are disappointed. Mr. Churchill, angling for trade union support, dare not openly advise deflation and the retreat from full employment. Mr. Attlee, angling for the middle-class vote, seems equally unwilling to expound a Socialist policy which would transform full employment from a fortunate accident of the post-war world into the basis of a new political economy. British politics have reached a dead point where motion can only be restored by a sudden jolt of imaginative leadership.

Without such leadership, it is unlikely that the Labour Party will win a majority sufficiently large for stable Government. By refusing to take the risk of an early election, Mr. Attlee has brought on himself all the consequences that we predicted. He has lost, instead of gaining, room for manœuvre, and he has been thrown on the defensive. By clinging to trusted but outworn colleagues, instead of reconstructing his Government and recasting his policy in the course of this year, he has extorted from the Parliamentary Labour Party a loyalty which has sapped its energy; and in doing these things he has unwittingly reserved for himself the sole responsibility for the success or failure of his Party at the General Election. Mr. Truman did much the same thing last year. He succeeded, against every prediction, because, disregarding his more cautious advisers, he injected into the campaign a Fair Deal programme which appealed to the ordinary non-political voter as human, sensible and exciting. Will Mr. Attlee repeat this success and provide the dynamic which alone can thaw the public opinion freeze and upset all statistical predictions?

PEASANTS AND MAFIA

By the third week of November the taking and tilling of land in the large estates had spread from Calabria, where it began late in October, to Sicily and Campania, Puglie, the Basilicata, and even Sardinia. Much of this land was covered by the weed and thorn of years of abandonment; much of it had been promised to the peasants soon after the war but never handed over; and some of it was land which peasant co-operatives had already brought under cultivation before being evicted. The *braccianti*—the landless peasants who crowd these Southern provinces—seem as hopeful and excited as if the Heavens had tumbled precious stones down to them instead of the rock and flint of land long unbroken; long before dawn the whole able-bodied population of the landless villages gets on the march—together with the schoolmaster, when there is one, and often enough the priest—and it is long after dark before they are home again.

Here in Sicily the occupation has an added drama. The poor peasants of the province of Palermo were the first to move. They began occupying *latifondi* on November 13th; by the end of the week the occupation had spread "like an oil patch"—as one orator said—to the neighbouring provinces of Caltanisetta, Enna and Agrigento, the central part of the island where conditions are perhaps more primitive than anywhere else in Europe. With the occupation of the *feudi* of Baron Lucio Tasca, at Vallelunga, and the *feudo* of Micciché, at Villalba, which is run by the notorious *Mafioso*, Don Calogero Vizzini, the peasants had taken over about 25,000 acres. Official statistics, it may be added, give Sicily a total of 1,189,540 acres of *latifondi*, or 22 per cent of the area of the island. In some cases the peasants had gone beyond the immediate objectives of the Confederterra, their trade union federation, and, as Bosi, the secretary-general of the Confederterra, has pointed out, had occupied land for which the federation had not in fact asked.

But the drama in Sicily comes from the fact that the peasants have not only to face the landowners and the Government. They have also to face the Mafia, which is more dangerous even than hunger or the police. The battle in Sicily is much more between the peasants and the Mafia than between the peasants and the landowners. Banners and signboards carried in procession through Palermo this week carried an ancient war-cry: "The land to the Peasants!" They also carried a new one, a sign that the peasant unions have come to maturity and have learnt to look beyond the immediate need for land—"Down with the Mafia!"

Just what the Mafia still means in Sicily was measured during the negotiations between the peasants and the landowners that began after the taking of land. These negotiations were in their third day; at the end of an all-night session, with agreement at last in sight, the landowners suddenly withdrew. Headed by Prince Giardinelli, the landowners had proved recalcitrant but apparently ready for compromise in the end. Then, not long after dawn, the antichamber of the Prefect's office in the Via Maqueda (where the negotiations were being held) began—in the words of an eye-witness—"to fill up with strange characters with caps on back-to-front, with hair falling over their eyes, heavy boots, unpromising faces." Alarmed that compromise might rob them of the land they dominated, the Mafia had sent its chosen leaders. These spoke with the counts and barons; and the counts and barons broke off negotiations. The Mafia, talking as it were with its hand on the trigger, had its way.

Survival of the Mafia is not simply the product of lawless tradition or the accident of warm Sicilian temperament. It is the consequence of the customs of land tenure peculiar to this island. *Latifondi* in Sicily are leased, in the general way, not to the peasants who work the land, but to *gabelloti*, intermediaries or sub-contractors (originally, perhaps, mere bailiffs) who lease in their turn to smaller intermediaries and so on down the scale until, at third or fourth remove from the actual owner, the land is leased eventually to the man who works it. This method of tenure explains not only the Mafia, but also the appalling abandonment of the *latifondi* of Sicily—whole ranges of hills and plateaux where one may go for miles without seeing sign of life or human habitation. Few or none of the intermediaries invest in the land they rent; their object seems exclusively to extort from the peasant more than they must pay the landlord. Having leased his land by agreements which are usually for many years, the landlord does not invest either; he merely takes his rent.

Intermediaries, to be sure, exist in other parts of Italy. Where Sicily is a law unto itself is that the intermediaries, the *gabelloti* large and small, have contrived by skilful combination and the connivance of the landowning interest to secure a strange position of dominance. This dominance is based on terror; and the terror is exercised by the Mafia. Hence the peasants are asking not for the elimination of the *gabelloti* (now and then there may exist a conscientious intermediary) but of the *gabelloti mafiosi*—the intermediaries who maintain themselves by terror. It appears to be fair to say that this means almost all the *gabelloti*.

The terror of the Mafia works both ways. The *gabelloti mafiosi* terrorise the peasants into giving them unduly much payment in produce for the land they sub-lease; and they terrorise the landowners into continued agreement with their terms. While they tend to murder the peasants, they usually let the landowners off with a fat ransom. It is a simple but effective system not unknown in Chicago, where Al Capone and other Sicilians who learnt the game at home have shown what well-directed terror can do.

But why should the landowners not rid themselves of this terror by calling in the State, by refusing once and for all to pay blackmail, by siding with the peasants ? The answer lies in the last part of the question. However much a nuisance it may be from time to time, the Mafia can always be relied upon to act against the peasants. A Sicilian nobleman need have business dealings only with one or two top *gabelloti*, who will screw out of the peasants as much as can possibly be screwed. The princes and barons can live elegantly in Palermo or in Rome, averting their eyes from the conditions which give them luxury and leisure ; and only every now and then must they let in the *gabelloto* by the back door and chaffer with that sordid character. The landowners tolerate the Mafia, in short, and give it their support, because the Mafia acts as a powerful barrier against social reform.

Only when the peasants were weak have the landowners ever moved against the Mafia. When Fascism had got the better of social revolution after the first world war, the Government moved severely against the Mafia, but did nothing to eliminate the conditions of land tenure which produced it. After 1945, with a new danger of social revolution, the Mafia sprang at once to life. From the end of the war until today, 104 peasants, many of them leading trade unionists, have fallen to the bullets of the Mafia. Once again, when the danger of social change had effectively passed with the Demochristian victory of April, 1948, good relations between the Mafia and the landowners cooled ; and it seems that promises made to the Mafia were broken. The State, after all, should now be able of itself to keep the peasants in order. Seeing itself thus cast off, the Mafia thereupon stopped murdering peasants and began to kidnap landowners and extort ransom. This is substantially the story of the notorious bandit Giuliano, who passes among many now for a kind of Robin Hood at war with the police.

But the situation today is no longer that of the 'Twenties. When the Fascists began to suppress the Mafia, they had already suppressed the peasant trade unions—which the Demochristians have not. The unions today are stronger than ever. They work together in town and country. This means that the landowners are between two fires—between the pressure of the peasants to cultivate the *latifondi* and to eliminate the *gabelloti* by securing *direct* lease of land by the owners to peasant cooperatives, and the threat of violence by the Mafia. As this month's negotiations have again shown, when it comes to the pinch the landowners prefer to placate the Mafia. The peasants, however, have placed the Government before an alternative which everyone here seems to have understood : either to maintain the power of the State behind a system of tenure which is inseparable from the Mafia, or else to begin the reform and dismantlement of that system and to join with the peasants in ridding Sicily of its gangsters and worst parasites. For many of the peasants and their leaders the issue may well be one of life and death. If the *gabelloti* can be sufficiently weakened, the Mafia will hesitate to strike back. If not, the tale of murders seems likely to begin all over again. But the choice for De Gasperi can be scarcely less painful : either he must incur the wrath of the landowners, his greatest source of support, or he must confess, *urbi et orbi*, that he is not prepared to govern Sicily without the Mafia.

Palermo. BASIL DAVIDSON

CRIMINAL LIBEL

IN the House of Commons on Monday, the Attorney-General explained that no question of a criminal offence was raised by the "John Hadlow" letter. That such a question should have been asked suggests that there are still M.P.s who live in the period, 150 years ago, when criminal libel was the principal weapon of the Executive against the press.

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the law of criminal libel was fashioned by the Government into a weapon against printer and editor to replace the control that had been lost by the repeal of the old Licensing Acts, through which censorship was maintained in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was possibly a memory of this that prompted the Parliamentary question as to whether the law of criminal libel might not be evoked to punish THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION for publishing the "Hadlow" letter.

In fact, however, it would have been a surprising development if the law of criminal libel had been evoked to safeguard the functionaries of the Executive. Even in the eighteenth century, when the law of criminal libel was at its most extended, it was held that it was not an indictable offence to call a Justice of the Peace "a logger-headed, slouch-headed, bursen-bellied hound," though at this time a Justice of the Peace was not only a judicial but also an administrative officer of the State. Accusations of improper partiality among minor officials were not held to be criminal. Thus an attack on the impartiality of the Hull Corporation, in the course of which it was said of one Alderman that "whenever he comes to put on his gown, Satan enters into him," was not sufficient to warrant criminal proceedings.

It was quite otherwise, however, when the Government itself, as opposed to its servants, was attacked. In the eighteenth century it had seemed natural to the Judges that anyone who made use of a newspaper or pamphlet to beget an ill opinion of the Government was committing a crime. "If people should not be called to account," said Lord Chief Justice Holt in Tutchin's case in 1704, "for possessing the people with an ill opinion of the Government, no Government could subsist. For it is very necessary for all Governments that the people should have a good opinion of it." Exactly a hundred years later another Chief Justice, Lord Ellenborough, laid down precisely the same doctrine when he presided over the trial of William Cobbett. "It is no new doctrine that if a publication be calculated to alienate the affections of the people, by bringing the Government into disesteem whether the expedient be by ridicule or obloquy . . . it is a crime."

The Judges here were speaking of seditious libel, which was in origin but one of the types of criminal libel. In essence, criminal libel, which sprang from a conception of Roman Law, punishes any defamatory words which are calculated to cause a breach of the peace. Since, as all wartime propagandists learn, the truth is far more likely to excite discord and rancour than even the most ingeniously concocted untruth, it was rightly held that the greater the truth the greater the criminal libel.

Therefore, in theory the most important breach in the criminal libel law so far as newspapers were concerned was the mid-nineteenth-century provision of Lord Campbell's Act that the truth of a statement might be pleaded as a defence in criminal proceedings. In reality, as the evidence before the Parliamentary committee which examined the then law of libel showed, by the middle of the nineteenth century criminal libel has ceased to be an effective method by which the State could control the press. Lord Campbell's Act therefore provided that the truth might be told under proper safeguards. It must be shown that the publication was for the public benefit, and naturally truth was no defence when the charge was one of printing blasphemous, seditious or obscene words.

Blasphemous libels, however, like the common or garden sort of criminal libels, have suffered through their association with seditious libel. William Hone, the Radical bookseller of the 1820's, ended one of his parodies, *Don John (Murray) or Don Juan Unmasked*, as follows:—

> Lord Byron's Dedication of *Don Juan* to Lord Castlereagh was suppressed by Mr. Murray from delicacy to Ministers.
>
> *Question:* Why did not Mr. Murray suppress Lord Byron's *Parody* on the Ten Commandments?
>
> *Answer:* Because it contains nothing in ridicule of Ministers, and therefore nothing that *they* could suppose would be to the displeasure of Almighty God.

All this is most unfortunate because criminal libel—had it been confined to its original purpose—might have proved of great social value. Indeed, it still provides an effective defence for incautious ladies.

This most practical use of the law of criminal libel springs from the theory that if anyone insults a lady's honour there is likely to be a breach of the peace. The leading case of the textbooks is that of an unfortunate Mr. Adams who answered an advertisement in the *Daily Telegraph* in 1888. The advertisement in question was from a young lady who offered her services to anyone who would care to employ her. Possibly misunderstanding the nature of the offer, Mr. Adams replied: "I have no situation to offer you . . . but I should like to make certain proposals to you. . . ." The Victoria law reporter does not set out the letter further in verbatim but he does explain that it went on to make an offer which "compromised her modesty." Such suggestions were held then and since to amount to criminal libel, and a good proportion of criminal libels to-day arise from similar circumstances, though there has been a continual narrowing of the grounds upon which such criminal proceedings could be based. In 1760, for example, it was sufficient for the printer of *Lloyds Evening Post* to insert in his paper that the Earl of Clanricarde had married a Dublin actress (a mistake, as it later transpired) for him to be indicted for criminal libel.

While the narrowing of the law in this respect is to be welcomed it is to be equally deplored in another respect. In the 19th century it did appear that we were evolving a remedy for group libel, and a number of 18th and 19th century cases can be cited to show that, had the law continued to develop along these lines, the preaching of religious and racial hatreds would have automatically been an offence.

It is still theoretically a crime to libel any sect, company or class of men, without mentioning any person in particular, provided it is proved that the libel tends to excite the hatred of the people against all belonging to such sect or class and conduces to a breach of the peace. There is thus provided a criminal remedy where there is no remedy by way of a civil action for libel. In such cases, while there is no individual person who could bring an action, the whole class can, nevertheless, be protected by the action of the State.

Criminal proceedings have, for example, been taken against a person who wrote of a Roman Catholic Nunnery that is was "a brothel of prostitution." This was held to be an aspersion on the character of nuns in general, though none were singled out by name. Similarly in 1822 a Mr. Williams was indicted for stating that on the death of the then late Queen none of the bells in the several churches in Durham were tolled. Upon this he founded a general attack upon the loyalty of the Anglican Clergy of the Diocese. Perhaps, however, the most interesting modern parallel is the case of Dr. Shebbeare. In 1758 Dr. Shebbeare published a sensational account of a murder which was supposed to have been committed by some unspecified Jews who were said by him to have lately arrived from Portugal and to be then living near Broad Street in London. Dr. Shebbeare's story was the usual anti-Semitic tale of the ritual murder of a Jewish woman and her new-born baby for the woman's supposed offence of associating with a Christian man. As a result of this publication, some Jews who, it happened, had arrived from Portugal and who happened to be then living in Broad Street were attacked by a mob and though they were not, in fact, lynched, were very badly man-handled. Criminal proceedings were taken, although it was clear that the persons attacked were not, in fact, those accused of the murder.

Extension of the law along these lines might have well provided a remedy for anti-Semitism and Fascism. Unfortunately, modern cases have shown that the law of criminal libel is not a satisfactory method of dealing with the problem. Perhaps in its use in the conflict with the press its vitality has been sapped. It is, however, a curious coincidence that the "Hadlow" case should have provoked a discussion of the law of criminal libel. For the publication of the "John Hadlow" letter itself arose out of the far wider question of how the State should control those who would provoke racial or religious animosities. For this, criminal libel might have provided the remedy. Because it has been discredited by its use against the press, this is no reason why at least one of the principles upon which criminal libel was based, the protection of a minority against defamatory attack, might not be re-examined in the light of modern needs.

BARRISTER-AT-LAW

A LONDON DIARY

In Warsaw two years ago I had a two-hour conversation with Mr. Gomulka, then Vice-President of Poland. I was urged to see him on the ground that he was the most reliable and representative of the Polish Communists. He certainly struck me as tough and uncompromising. I take it that no one in Poland or anywhere else really believes that he is guilty of introducing "Pilsudski agents" into the ranks of the Polish Communists, or of committing any of the other absurd crimes with which President Bierut is said to have charged him. A particularly conventional and loyal Communist, he is not even likely to have been toying with any deviation except in the sense of having disagreed with the Cominform policy of trampling on national Communist Parties when they dared to put in a word for the interests of their own countries. It seems likely that Gomulka and others in Poland, are to be accused of Titoism; and some of them will presumably suffer the fate of Rajk. Events in Bulgaria are even more terrible and spectacular. There have been numerous arrests. Kostov, a member of the Central Committee of Bulgarian Communists since 1924, ranks in Bulgaria second only to Dimitrov. Only two years ago, on his 50th birthday, he was extolled as a great Communist hero. To-day he is accused of Titoism, and if his trial has been long postponed, one deduces it has been hard to persuade him to confess. My deduction from all these events in Eastern Europe is that Moscow knows that all the best Communists, who were members of the Resistance in their own countries, tend to sympathise with Tito, or rather, perhaps one should say, would like their countries to be autonomous members of a Communist Federation, instead of servants of Soviet nationalism.

* * *

A series of monographs about the U.S.S.R. is being published by the *Public Affairs Press* (Washington, D.C.). Since they are meant "for the use of scholars and others engaged in research and in the interpretation of public affairs," these monographs can claim a certain degree of objectivity—a quality almost as rare in American comment on Russia as in Soviet comment on America. The volume in front of me contains Russian cartoons about the United States from Moscow's comic magazine *Krokodil*. According to the editor, Mr. William Nelson, the Kremlin began to "teach its people to hate America" in the summer of 1946. It would be very interesting to have another book showing American cartoons attacking Russia side by side with the anti-American Soviet cartoons of the same period. We should then get some hint about "who began it" and perhaps some indication of the action and reaction that there appears to have been between American and Soviet policy once the short honeymoon period of 1945 was over. This collection of purely Soviet cartoons shows the Russian cartoonists as brilliant draughtsmen with a not very good supply of jokes. The whole subject of American-Russian relations is illuminated for me by one of these cartoons. Unlike every other in the book, it appears to be a definite case of the Soviet Union laughing at itself. Mr. Nelson himself points out that Russian newspapers are full of articles of "self-criticism," but it does not occur to him that this cartoon may belong to the same category. It shows a Soviet worker talking to a comrade while putting up an electric bulb. It is called "Clever Invention" and the words underneath it run:

> "The incandescent lamp was invented by our people, Yablochkov and Lodygin."
>
> "Yes, but the Americans invented the idea that Edison invented it!"

Is it not odd that Mr. Nelson should regard this agreeable bit of ridicule of exaggerated Soviet nationalism as an attack on America?

* * *

Unless Vyshinsky and Hector McNeil are blacking each other's eyes, the Press seldom thinks Uno worth reporting. Those who want any serious account of what is happening at Lake Success—and in spite of the cold war much that is interesting and important does happen there—must be specially supplied with documents; and these come too late to be journalistically useful. It follows that the weekly half-hour summary of the proceedings of Uno given by the B.B.C. is really important. Usually I've thought it excellently done, but last Sunday I was a good deal perturbed at the balance and the allocation of time given to the items. About a quarter of an hour was spent on the dispute about the future status of Jerusalem, but only a brief mention was made of the struggle in the Trusteeship Commission which is at the moment by all odds the most interesting Uno event. Nobody could have told from this broadcast how the Powers were grouped on the issue of Native rights, or what the resolutions were or what was the upshot of Scott's dramatic intervention. There may have been some technical reason which escaped me, but the impression made on the ordinary listener was that while the B.B.C. dealt very fairly with controversies which did not involve a direct British interest, it lacked either the independence or the objectivity to give a factual account of a matter in which a large part of the public thinks Britain has voted on the wrong side.

* * *

All of us who went to the *Sunday Times* book exhibition must agree that it was an excellent show. But it had its faults. By holding it in Grosvenor House, the *Sunday Times* must have scared off quite a number of people who are embarrassed by "smart" places. Because it was sponsored, in part at least as an advertisement, by one newspaper, the rest of the Press failed to give it the editorial notice it deserved. Finally, too many of the fifty-thousand who visited it were the converted; the people who already buy several books a year. I agree entirely with these and similar criticisms made in the latest issue of the *Bookseller*, by one of the exhibitors. Such a show can give a real fillip to publishing, especially if it attracts the marginal book buyer. But why allow such an admirable project to be the preserve of one Press Lord? Surely the National Book League is the right organisation to sponsor it? I know there are financial and technical obstacles, but on such an issue our publishers—who tend to be an anarchic crowd—could and should get together. They would have to start planning now. But they could count on a great deal of goodwill and assistance from all of us who care about British books.

* * *

At the end I find myself wondering what sort of poems four Dons, one art critic, and one literary critic, are all going to like. It's excellent that the Arts Council are going to give £1,100 in prizes to poets as part of the Festival of Britain programme. And Sir Kenneth Clark, C. M. Bowra, Lord David Cecil, John Hayward, George Rylands, and Basil Willey are certainly all alert and sensitive people. But wouldn't it be reassuring to a competing poet to have at least one poet among his judges? I remember when the B.B.C. ran a poetry competition some years before the war. They had Walter de la Mare to judge, along with Edward Marsh. There was a tremendous entry then, I believe—something like eleven thousand poems—and one of the prize-winners was Dylan Thomas, who hadn't yet published a book. The Arts Council are offering £500 for a poem of not less than three hundred lines—the length of poem that no poet can hope to place in an English periodical—and £600 to be divided, as the judges decide, between six and twelve poems of under fifty lines each.

* * *

It must, I suppose, be a matter of age groups. A surprising number of men and women in their forties and fifties have told me with something like bewilderment that they have great difficulty in remembering anything about the last war. They remember the first world war and also the dates of Hitler's occupations of the Rhineland and Austria and Mussolini's seizure of Albania, but only with difficulty can they recall any of the battles or events between 1939 and 1945. They constantly find themselves assuming that they are six years younger than they are; continuity goes straight on from the 'Thirties. More, they simply forget their personal life between '39 and '45. I do not know the psychological explanation. It is not any kind of black-out due to the horror of war for many surviving forties and fifties in this country did not witness much horror. The point wants very careful study. In contrast with what I have said about the forties and fifties, I find that men and women of about thirty remember every detail about the war. It has been to them almost the whole of adult experience and has absorbed the emotions of adventurous youth. CRITIC

FIRST-CLASS TOURISTS

Non-discrimination in Europe's tourist trade
  Now ends by Western Union's decree,
Purchases unlimited in zones of Marshall Aid,
  Henceforward may be duty free.

Customs regulations for some nations they relax,
  Non-Europeans can jump the queue,
While steely-eyed inspectors disembowel the natives' packs,
  Extorting every farthing due.

Non-Europeans with costly souvenirs
  Will now arrive with nothing to declare.
Europeans query, when frisked at the frontiers,
  "Is it just? Is it right? Is it fair?"

Non-Europeans all barriers may pass
  With jewels, clothing, spirits, smokes and scent;
European travellers, despised delinquent class,
  Preferential practices resent.

Visitors rejoicing in non-European birth
  The Customs neither strip nor scrutinise;
Europeans question, as the sweepings of the earth,
  "Is it just? Is it fair? Is it wise?"

European Union, directed against none,
  Among the touring masses has not spread,
But European tourists will soon join up as one
  In every European Customs shed.

European struggles for equal tourist rights
  Will soon break out in every Customs House;
Some say common interests the nations will unite—
  There's nothing so uniting as a grouse.

It's not a Customs Union that Europe now creates,
  But a tourists' anti-Customs underground.
Non-Europeans are favoured in the Western Union States—
  Is it right? Is it just? Is it sound?

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed. Paste entries on a POSTCARD.

It would be unwise to suggest that when Handel wrote his "Messiah" he had Bradford, Leeds, Huddersfield or Laisterdyke in mind.—*News Chronicle.* (Joyce Meadows.)

"Bright Evening" is the name at present given to the "Bright Hour" at the B—— Methodist Church. Mr. — —, yesterday (Thursday) week, read an interesting paper on "Rusty iron," and a discussion followed.—*Craven Herald and Pioneer.* (J. W. Ward.)

Truly we have come to a pitiable pass when we have Egyptians, Russians, Mexicans and a variety of Asiatics claiming the ability to shape men's lives more wisely than we can.—*Sunday Express.* (Robert Borger.)

Sir John Anderson was on board, and we stood together on the bridge and watched the bleak guardian that nightly flashes its warning to the traffic on the sea.

"It wouldn't make much of a golf course," said either Sir John or myself. It really does not matter which, because it is the way men of British blood speak when their emotions are touched.—*The Sketch.* (I. Leyshon.)

Pray for the souls of Russians and Communists! This passionate plea was propounded by Lord Pakenham, Minister of Civil Aviation . . . Condemning the Communists as unfortunate dupes, he nevertheless urged his listeners to remember that although they were doctrinally beneath contempt yet they had immortal souls.—*The Cub* (Queen Mary College Newspaper). (B. Garth.)

WERE WE UTOPIANS?

I SHOULD like to associate myself with all who deplored the vote of the Labour Government's spokesman against the claim of the Rev. Michael Scott to speak for the Hereros before the United Nations. It is easy for Foreign Offices to dismiss Scott, as they used to dismiss Morel and Nevinson, as a meddlesome individual, who has no official status. Unfortunately, the British Government, with most of its allies, was equally deaf and equally hostile when Mrs. Pandit, on behalf of her Government, pleaded the case of the Indians against the recent aggravation of the colour bar in South Africa. Empires will always stand together against any champion of their coloured subjects, even when he has an official status.

The record has become even more disturbing since last week. We have now had at Lake Success a statement from the spokesmen of the British Government in which they throw over all its obligations to international public opinion for its administration of the former Mandated areas as a Trustee. Without first-hand knowledge of Tanganyika, which I lack, it would be futile to discuss the details which the Mission of the Trusteeship Committee criticised after its visit. But one needs no special knowledge to feel dismay and indignation at the blunt refusal to submit reports to the Trusteeship Committee. The Committee asked, in particular, for reports on such matters as the progress made in coping with illiteracy and in promoting the use and study of native languages. These were refused on the ground that, if submitted, they would be subject to "discussion" in the Committee. The insolent jibe was added that members of the Committee can get what information they want in a public library. In plain words, the Labour Government refuses not merely to adopt any of the suggestions of the Trusteeship Committee; it will not even tolerate discussion of its record as an administrator. This means the end of the Trusteeship idea.

The Labour Government has allowed itself to be stung into this defiance by Communist criticisms. But by reacting in this way it has exposed itself in the eyes of Africans to the worst of interpretations. It will not tolerate the criticism even of other White men. It claims the old-fashioned right to do what it will with its own, or (to use Joseph Chamberlain's ugly phrase) "to wallop its own niggers." To what superior tribunal can Africans now appeal against their omnipotent rulers? The Commonwealth has no common code of law or decency that it can or will enforce on behalf of its dark-skinned subjects against Dr. Malan. There remained the hope that the United Nations might embody the conscience of mankind. This hope our Government is doing its utmost to destroy.

My memories go back to days when Socialists thought otherwise. I was, with Arthur Henderson, Bernard Shaw, Albert Thomas and others of their generation, a delegate at the Conference of the Allied Socialists during the first World War. It proposed to hand over all colonies not yet ripe for self-government to direct administration by an international authority—the League that was to be. We believed that the capitalist interests which dominated most, if not all, colonial administrations, could be more effectively controlled by an international than by a national authority. Our further purpose was to end the competition for "places in the sun," which was, as we saw it, the chief cause of the competition in armaments that preceded the war. On reflection we modified our first sweeping demand, because we realised that colonial administrators, bred up in several distinct systems of law and tradition, would find some difficulty in working together. My own contribution to the discussion was a proposal to create an international college or university at which an international civil service, including a colonial civil service, could be trained. In the end, a year or two later, a compromise solution was adopted—that all non-selfgoverning colonies should be placed under the Mandate (now Trustee) system. This was, until recently, the accepted doctrine of the Labour and Socialist movement. We defined the "Mandate" idea strictly, and laid particular stress on the inspection of colonies.

This phase in the life of the Socialist movement is now forgotten. The tide is now running against any form of international organisation that calls for any sacrifice of sovereignty, or even for orderly discussion. Were we Utopians, or has the present generation been corrupted by office? When I read that during the 30 months ending in July 1949, "we" (meaning the propertied class) invested overseas, chiefly in Africa and Asia, no less than £468,000,000, I ask myself what checks we are using to control this new phase of economic Imperialism, so as to ensure the welfare of the native populations? Is it enough that we should trust our officials, struggling as they are, first and foremost, to wipe out our dollar debts? The Communists will defeat us beyond recovery if they can drive us into repudiating the sovereignty of disinterested international opinion.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

CHINESE COMMUNISTS

III.—LAND AND INDUSTRY

CHINA is still 80 or 90 per cent. agrarian, and until recently the Communists have been mainly concerned with agrarian policy. The general pattern of land reform in North China since 1946 has been a redistribution to produce equality in holdings. This has not reduced productivity, as some critics have argued that it would, because there has also been a great development of co-operative labour groups, so that the use of labour has become more and not less efficient. In many areas the new system has shown itself capable of producing a considerable rise in productivity and living standards.

The real question is how will the system develop? If the land reform were followed by a *laisser-faire* policy, there might be a tendency for a new concentration of land ownership and the development of a new landlord class. But it is certain that the Government will not pursue such a policy, and it will be much easier to prevent the growth of a new landlord class than it was to destroy the old one. When it becomes possible to provide better farming equipment, the co-operative aspects of the system are likely to become steadily more important. A co-operative labour group which obtained the use of a tractor, for example, would find that it was necessary to pool land, as well as to pool labour, so as to get the benefits of increased productivity. The ultimate trend will probably be towards collective farming. So far, however, this system of farming is confined to a few experiments in areas where there was uncultivated land or where, in Manchuria, the Japanese had already started large-scale farms.

The real long-term problem is the population problem. A development of better agricultural techniques will reduce the number of workers necessary for the cultivation of a given area, and it will need a considerable increase in productivity to provide a really adequate diet even for the existing population of China. At present, it is hoped that the development of industry will draw off the surplus population from the rural areas, but the Communists have not yet produced any long-term population policy. The general anti-Malthusian bias of Marxism has been supported by a belief that the area under cultivation can be greatly increased. (The Comintern advisers of the 1920s argued that only 15 per cent. of the cultivable area of China was cultivated, and more recent Chinese Communist writings have quoted a figure of 25 per cent.) In the Yenan area and in Manchuria, there is a considerable amount of uncultivated land; but most non-Communist investigators believe that, for China as a whole, cultivation could only be extended by a comparatively small percentage unless there was extremely large capital expenditure on irrigation or reclamation projects.

The real test will come in a few years' time, when the new regime is in a position to obtain accurate statistics about population and land. It is quite probable that the increase in agricultural production will prove to be not much greater than would be required to give a fully adequate diet to the existing population—ruling out improvements in productivity beyond what is possible on the basis of known agricultural techniques, and assuming a level of investment which would not impose too severe a strain on the Chinese economy. If adequate information about land and population indicates this sort of situation, the Communists will then face a clear choice between "scientific" and "doctrinaire" policies. On the one hand, they may modify the Marxist anti-Malthusian tradition to fit the facts of the Chinese situation and plan for a stabilised population; and they have the techniques of mass education which would make it possible to stabilise the population before it has increased much beyond its present figure. On the other hand, they may cling to Communist tradition and refuse to admit the existence of a population problem. On the one line of development a cumulative rise in the standard of living is probable; on the other, a rise in the standard of living will only be temporary unless the situation is saved by revolutionary developments in agricultural science.

Recent speeches by Communist leaders have indicated a shift of emphasis from agriculture to industry. A rise in industrial production from 10 per cent. of the national income to 40 per cent. was indicated as the objective of medium term policy. But, so far, no definite plans have appeared, and it is too early to expect them. The Communists have inherited a lot of nationalised industry from the Kuomintang, largely former Japanese enterprises. At present, the main effort seems to be concentrated on getting this working efficiently. The Bureau for Government-managed industry in Peking has been developing its statistical and accounting sections, and is finding that a lot of Government-managed industry has been working below normal standards of efficiency. A rather interesting special problem appeared in Manchuria. Most of the higher management and technicians retired with the Kuomintang armies. The Communists did a very remarkable job in getting factories running again simply through the efforts of the workers. But the workers then got exaggerated ideas of their own abilities and argued that it was unnecessary to hire new officials such as engineers or accountants at high salaries. The result was that many Manchurian factories were working full time, but at much less than normal productivity and at much more than the normal rate of depreciation. This sort of problem is being met by educational campaigns with articles in the press citing Russian experience to show the importance of proper technical management.

In the transitional period of New Democracy, private enterprise is supposed to exist beside Government enterprise. Exact details do not seem to have been worked out. In many industries—textiles and cement for example—both private and State factories exist. In some fields, Government concerns are supposed to provide a "yardstick" to check possible exploitation by private business. The Tientsin Foreign Trade Bureau, for instance, is primarily a controlling organisation, but it has a trading department which is supposed to compete on equal terms with private firms. In fact, conditions have been difficult for private business, largely because of a temporary conflict between political and economic priorities in labour policy.

For the Communists, the class structure of society is of primary importance. The first priority was, therefore, to win the support of the industrial workers and to convince them that the new regime represented their interests, even if this conflicted with the objective of maximising production. The Kuomintang had gone a long way in trying to keep the support of industrial labour and, to outbid the Kuomintang, the Communists had to begin by supporting almost any labour demand, however unreasonable. But this was a transitional phase. As one Communist put it: "Now we feel that the workers recognise that this Government really represents their interests, so we can begin to tell them that some of their demands are unreasonable and that, even in their own long term interests, they must not make conditions impossible for the employer." In fact, there was a steady shift during the summer towards Government mediation between workers and employers.

At one time, business men in Tientsin became very depressed about their prospects. When the Communists realised how serious the situation was they called a conference, which was addressed by Liu Shao-ch'i, the leading theorist of the Chinese Communist Party after Mao Tse-tung. According to one informant who was present, the general lines of his argument were as follows:

> As Communists, we consider that you are exploiting your workers; but we realise that, at the present stage of China's economic development, such exploitation is unavoidable and even socially useful. What we want is for you to go ahead and develop production as fast as possible and we will do what we can to help. You may be afraid of what will happen to you and your families when we develop from New Democracy to Socialism. But you need not really be afraid. If you do a really good job in developing your business, and train your children to be first-class technical experts, you will be the obvious people to put in charge of the nationalised enterprise and you may find that you earn more as managers of a socialised enterprise than as owners.

Whether developments will be as smooth and reasonable as this, remains to be seen. From the one side, one might doubt whether private capitalists could ever co-operate loyally with a Communist regime. From the other, one might doubt whether the Communists could ever force their more "doctrinaire" officials to behave reasonably to private capitalists. But, as in the case of agriculture, there is a reasonable possibility that the predominantly "scientific" attitude of the Chinese Communist leaders will lead to developments considerably different from those produced by a "doctrinaire" application of Communist principles.

MICHAEL LINDSAY

YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS

THE very serious increase of about 25 per cent. in the number of children and young persons found guilty of indictable offences in 1948, as compared with 1947, has not unnaturally given rise to considerable anxiety. There is certainly no one clear cause, although it is most remarkable how very few of those who appear in the Courts are above the average in intelligence, or come from homes where both parents are living happily together in a district which is devoid of slums and which has adequate open spaces.

A broken home may mean that one of the parents is dead or that there is a step-parent; it may mean that the parents are divorced or separated; or it may mean a home in which the parents are continually quarrelling in front of their children. In all such cases there is produced in the child a sense of insecurity and unhappiness with divided loyalty to one or other of his parents. It is generally the unhappy child and not the "wicked" child who is seen in the Juvenile Court.

In so far as so many of the children in the Courts are now under 11, the reorganisation of the schools—as a result of which there are no older boys in the primary schools to set an example to the younger ones and keep them in order—may very well be a contributory cause. The shortage of leaders of the right calibre for the Play Centres and Youth Organisations is another very real cause. If young people can occupy their leisure properly, they will not gratify their passion for adventure illegally.

It is possible to find reasons in many directions, such as that the police mobile cars with their two-way telephone communication enable more culprits to be caught; or, as Lord Templewood has recently suggested, that the shortage of police encourages them to commit crimes with impunity; or that the uncleared bombed sites offer a special temptation to climb on the ruins (which to city children are like the rocks on the seashore), and eventually to break into an occupied house or shop; or that the lack of residential accommodation for educationally sub-normal or maladjusted children means that the same offenders are continually being charged. But the Archbishop of York and Sir Harold Scott, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, have found a new scapegoat. They are actually blaming the Juvenile Courts for not sufficiently impressing upon children the seriousness of their offences and for the leniency with which cases are treated.

It must be clearly understood that Juvenile Courts are Courts of primary jurisdiction, and that the procedure is exactly the same as in an adult Court. Unless the defendant pleads guilty, the case has to be proved beyond reasonable doubt by sworn evidence, and as in all the Courts of the country he is always given the benefit of the doubt. It is only in respect of treatment after the case has been proved that it is possible for there to be any justification for these criticisms.

Outside London, it is the custom for pre-trial inquiries to be made. The result is that, after the case has been heard, the Probation Officer's report is immediately handed to the Magistrates. If it is a suitable case, they will straightway place the defendant on probation, after having given him a lecture about the evil of what he has done—to which both he and his parents are in far too anxious a frame of mind to pay the least attention. All they want to hear is the result of the case. It is quite obvious that such procedure impresses neither the child nor its parent; they usually leave the Court in the belief that the child has been "let off."

Pre-trial inquiries are better than no inquiries at all, but are wrong, first because the defendant may be found not guilty and it is an infringement of the right of a citizen to have anyone probe into his home, until he loses that right by having had a case proved against him. They are also wrong because they deprive the Court of the opportunity to tell the child that what he has done is far too serious for the Bench to decide what action should be taken, and that he will therefore be remanded in order that the Probation Officer may make further inquiries and so that the child, his parents and the Bench may have time to consider the matter.

It is during the remand, this period of uncertainty when the child and the parents do not know whether he may be sent to an Approved School, that the Probation Officers make the best contacts with parents and child, so that if, at the end of the remand, the Court decides to give him the opportunity to prove his worth on probation, both he and his parents are in the right frame of mind to carry out the order.

Even a remand on bail is very often not enough to make an impression. But a remand in custody will really impress everyone concerned. However weak family life may be, family ties are extremely strong, and this separation of the child from its home, and of the parents from the child, even if it be for only seven days, undoubtedly makes them all feel that infringement of the law may bring serious consequences. A child must be made to understand that he cannot commit offences with impunity, and this period of uncertainty brings it home to him and his parents.

Some children require to be made to feel themselves the hurt they have done to other people so that they will hesitate to offend again. At present, the Court has practically no powers of punishment. Approved School training is not meant to be a punishment, although to the child the deprivation of his freedom is a very real hardship.

The 1948 Criminal Justice Act provides a new form of treatment in Detention Centres, to which a young person can be sent for a period of 3 or 6 months and where the regime will be constructive but strict discipline and hard work. These Centres do not yet exist, and when they do they will be an unsatisfactory form of treatment without supervision by a Probation Officer at the expiration of the order. The Act also provides for Attendance Centres, to which a boy can be sent for 3 hours at a time on a Saturday afternoon for not more than 12 hours. But these do not exist, and when they do, it is doubtful whether there will be sufficient boys from any one area to make them workable. At present, the only power of punishment which the Court has is to order the boy to be detained in the Remand Home for a period up to one month. But the Remand Home is a place of safety for those awaiting trial or on their way to an Approved School. It is impossible to deal satisfactorily with these three types of cases in the same institution.

There is, however, another aspect of the problem. It is generally felt that the parents are often more to blame than the children. But now that recognisances are, under the 1948 Act, no longer necessary in probation cases, the only way the Court can bring home to parents their responsibilities is to bind them over in high sureties under Section 55 of the Children and Young Persons Act to see that their child behaves himself during the specified period. The more the parents are made to realise that they themselves may get punished by having to pay the surety or go to prison, the more are they likely to co-operate with the Probation Officer.

To the general public the Court may appear sometimes to be too lenient and to place the same child on probation more than once. To send him to an Approved School for a period which may sometimes be even longer than three years must surely be the last resort. Excellent as the training is in most of the schools, nothing can really replace in the heart of the child the longing to remain in his own home. Only when the parents refuse to co-operate or the child requires a much more ordered life than they could ever provide for him does the Court, therefore, use this extreme measure. Thus it is extremely annoying when Quarter Sessions, not understanding all the experimental work which has been done with the child, reverses the order on appeal and either places him on probation yet again or else, as sometimes happens, fines him.

Although the quantity of delinquency has increased, on the whole the seriousness of the crimes committed has not. Very few of the children who come before the Courts are really bad. Given the right environment and a good home, most of them can be turned into first-class citizens.

BASIL HENRIQUES

SO THEY SAY . . .

DESPITE the fact that the Conservative Central Office is offering twice as much material (half a million words, on a *Daily Express* count) as the Labour Party's *Speakers' Handbook*, its *Campaign Guide*, published on Monday, appeared to make very little impact on the Opposition press. The *Daily Telegraph*, in fact, was so little impressed that it made no mention of it at all. Neither did the *Manchester Guardian*. It was left to *The Times* to discern that the *Guide* contained "over 700 closely printed pages of sustenance."

The *Daily Graphic* briefly noted it as presenting the "facts and figures on which Conservative candidates will fight the General Election," while the *Daily Mail* editorialised lengthily but half-heartedly, pointing out merely that the *Guide* was a "workmanlike book," and that "Conservative candidates and their supporters must master this pocket encyclopædia of politics."

The largest-selling Conservative paper, however, complained of a certain inadequacy. "Where is the ferocity?" asks the *Daily Express*. "The Tories research rather than conclude. . . . When the Tories come to Toryism the fire dies right out. . . . The Tory speaker is left to dream up his own ferocity and fire in the belly for the cause of enterprise and Empire. . . ."

The *Daily Worker* also had its say: "Never has there been a document which so brazenly and cynically treats the majority of Britain's citizens as political infants." The *Daily Herald* and *Daily Mirror* ignored the *Guide;* the *News Chronicle* made the good-humoured comment:—

> The handbook . . . contains nothing new, but . . . it presents all the material for arguing the case. . . . The handbook . . . has an uncomfortable resemblance to a half-brick. We can only hope—without very much conviction—that no Conservatives will have material cause to regret its shape.

Headline of the Week

The front page of last week's *Sunday Pictorial* featured a report that "girls no longer dare to travel alone in railway carriages at night or walk, unescorted, through dark and lonely lanes." A whispering campaign was said to be "unnecessarily panicking hundreds of thousands of women."

> The whispered, unpublished story now sweeping the country says that lately there has been a spate of cowardly assaults on women, that the law is powerless to control them, and that no woman is safe. . . . What are the facts? After an intensive, three weeks' investigation in London and the Provinces I am convinced that the danger is being exaggerated. . . .

The report carried a seven-column banner headline: ATTACKS ON WOMEN! It was set in black capitals one-inch high. The dog, as Dr. Watson said, didn't bark in the night.

AUTOLYCUS

SPANISH AFRICA

(By a Correspondent)

[An article, by the same correspondent, on French North Africa appeared in our issue of November 19.]

THE small coastal strip of North Africa facing Spain is a part of Morocco not generally visited by tourists. Yet it is one of the loveliest parts of Morocco: old Arab towns nestle among hills that slope gently to the Mediterranean, and, further East, stand the rugged mountains of the Riff where Adbul Krim fought in the 'Twenties. But a shadow hangs over this part of Morocco—the black shadow of Franco's brutal administration. Neither France nor Spain rules Morocco well. In the French Zone there is the familiar structure of a foreign imperialist Power clinging to its gains and resisting increasingly insistent nationalist demands. But the French "police State" is mild in comparison with the Spanish variety next door. The French are still trying inefficiently to do in Morocco what the British did, and finally abandoned, in India. Franco's rule in Morocco is a combination of Inquisition tactics and Gestapo techniques.

I entered the area by the road from Tangier. At the Spanish Zone frontier all travellers, men and women alike, are searched in tiny rooms built for that purpose. Foreigners are treated politely but Arabs are stripped, and a Moroccan political leader, now exiled from his home, told me how once he was not only stripped naked but had his shoes slashed to pieces. The Spanish, however, have other methods of dealing with "recalcitrant" Moroccans. A popular device is to exile them, obliging them to live in Tangier or Cairo; another is to prevent any money being sent to them; a third to confiscate their property or business, or that of their families, so that economically their life becomes unbearable.

In Tetuan, the capital of the Zone, the old town stands on the slope of a hill. In the magnificent tiled halls and patios, many of the delicately carved fountains no longer play: the water supply is insufficient. The young men have no jobs. The lands bring in no revenue because the crops fail from want of irrigation. And some of the men are in exile, some in prison; some have been beaten and tortured by the police so that they cannot work. In the demonstrations of 1947 a young man from one of the homes I visited was taken for questioning: when they sent him back he had lost his memory and he has never recovered it.

Franco's Gestapo had been at work a few weeks before I arrived in Tetuan. On the pretext that they had information concerning a plot, secret police burst into houses, instituted violent searches, destroying property and carrying off loot, while several hundred men were arrested and questioned under torture. In the Riff, similar "searches" took place. Hundreds of refugees from this round-up escaped across the frontier to seek refuge in the International Zone: among them was a Moroccan woman of 70 years whose home had been broken into one night as she slept. The Nationalist leaders (of the Islah Party of the Spanish Zone and of the Istiqlal Party in the French Zone) sent protests to the

Arab League and to Franco personally. After a few weeks the "pogrom" was called off, the victims released from jail. No doubt this was occasioned by the fact that Franco had just received confirmation that King Abdullah of Jordan would visit Spain: he presumably did not want to have to make too many explanations to his guest. Though Abdullah was invited all over Andalucia, he was not invited to Morocco.

A stroll round Tetuan at sunset will explain why there is not enough water, why there are no jobs, what, in short, the Spanish are doing in Morocco. For at sunset, in the one main street of the modern part of the town, almost every Spaniard in the place, man, woman and child, turns out to walk up and down. Then you realise that Tetuan, for centuries an Arab town, is fast being swamped by poor Spaniards from across the water. Tetuan now has a population of 85,000, of whom 35,000 are Spaniards. And what do all these Spaniards do? Not agricultural work or development of the land or construction of new reservoirs. They come from Spain to get jobs in the Government service, in the army or in business—if necessary by displacing Arabs. In all Spanish Morocco, which has a population of about a million, there are now no fewer than 62,500 Spanish civilians, nearly all of whom live in the towns. More and more are coming and gradually draining away the livelihood of the Moroccan people. As I sat at a cafe in the main street, a little ragged boy came to beg. He was a Spaniard. A Moroccan friend remarked bitterly, "You see they even send beggars to compete with ours. We have not even been left our poverty." The Army absorbs about 30 per cent. of the entire Budget of the Zone. At least 95 per cent. of all Moroccans in the Zone are illiterate; the schools which exist are Spanish; and, out of 14 million pesetas (£140,000 at the best rate) spent on education, 10 million is spent on Spanish children.

With an American friend and some misgivings I set out at midnight from Tetuan, bound for Melilla, in a tightly packed old bus, driven (I concluded) by one of the world's best mountain drivers. By dawn we were in the magnificent pine forests of the Riff, occasionally stopping at Army establishments or camps, but never passing any villages. The reason is that this road—for which Morocco paid—was built not to help the peasants but as a military road: it deliberately avoided villages, as the Spanish Army is still afraid of the Riffi tribes, who in 1934–6 nearly drove the Spanish into the sea and would have done so but for French help. Towards evening we arrived, shaken and grimy, at the port of Melilla. This is counted as Spanish territory, not as part of the Protectorate; hence two more passport and customs formalities.

Melilla is the outlet for the important Moroccan ores. The mines are owned by the Spanish and worked by Moroccans, who get 12 pesetas (about 2*s.* 6*d.*) a day. Out of the 900,503 tons produced last year, Britain imported 449,757 tons. The iron ore is of a very high quality, and this mineral wealth is Spain's economic excuse for hanging on to Morocco: the entire profit of this enterprise goes to Spain. In the mountains, apart from ores, there is a wealth of timber; and in the plains, with intelligently planned storage, irrigation could support all Mediterranean crops. But the dead hand of Franco's Spain lies over the land, and nothing thrives. The Nationalists see the future of their country as linked politically and economically with the rest of Morocco, in one independent State. So far, and in spite of all that the democratic world has said and done against Franco, scarcely a finger has been raised in their support.

MR. GODEY'S AMERICA

It was, in fact, the America of President Lincoln and General Grant; but the *Ohio Advertiser* had no hesitation in proclaiming that Mr. Godey, citizen of Philadelphia and publisher of *The Lady's Book and Magazine* had "become to the ladies of America, what Napoleon was to the people of France." Aided by his strong-minded Editress, Mrs. Hale, and an anonymous Fashion Editress who undertook buying commissions for out-of-town readers, Mr. Godey had acquired, by 1864, no less than 150,000 subscribers at $3 a year; and he had achieved, in his thirty years' career, the position of arbiter of elegances in dress, deportment, morals and literary taste.

His autocratic empire—to judge from some bound volumes of *The Lady's Book* found tucked away in a Hampstead attic—was strangely cut off from contemporary history. No hint was given in the 1864 issues that his crinolined ladies, with their passionate interest in cross-stitch and their seemingly endless appetite for love-sick serials, were remotely aware that the tide of civil war was fast carrying Lee towards Appomattox. Two years later, by way of postscript to the Great Rebellion, Elzey Hay of Georgia was given space to describe the sufferings which blockaded Southern young ladies had undergone in doing without pins and improvising ball dresses from "white factory cloth such as our Negroes used to wear"; but the feminine North, in those stirring 'Sixties, seems to have gone its way untroubled by great events.

So far as Mrs. Hale could contrive, it was to be a definitely feminist way. The chief concern of the Editress in those years was the founding of Vassar College. But apart from this enthusiasm of Mrs. Hale, the North, at the close of the Civil War, is mirrored in Mr. Godey's pages as a comfortable, pious, snobbish place—much more closely akin to Victorian England than Mr. Truman's United States is to the England of George VI. Even New York, where "most families dine at five o'clock," still had homely qualities. Thus Mrs. Vanriper of Briarville, daring an unescorted visit to the Great Fair, reaches her hotel "awfully stomach sick" from the train journey, is given by the manageress a small dose of potash bicarb.—this, while lying down on a sofa "with pillows"—and is then revived with "strong green tea, six oysters on the half shell, tenderloin steak and other dishes." Dickens would have savoured that.

Paris, it is true, had already begun to be the Mecca of travelled, sophisticated Americans: the only foreign correspondence carried by Mr. Godey's magazine was a detailed coverage of balls at the Tuileries, at one of which the Prince Imperial "was got up as Masaniello, by way of deference to universal suffrage and mobocracy." But the Editress was at pains to contrast the Empress Eugenie's "momomania" for costly dresses and long bills with the punctual payments made to tradespeople by Victoria of England—"an excellent economist"; and in recommending a finishing school in Paris, she was careful to emphasise that its owner, Mme de Belem, was "by birth and morals an English lady." New Englanders, one gathers, still aped in their lives and small-talk the manners of the English gentry: complaints of servants' appetites figure largely in *The Lady's Book*; a White House levée is described in much the style of a Victorian presentation; and readers are invited to note the current English contest between the "fine clay of the aristocracy and the gross earth of the middle and laboring classes."

Here and there a distinctively American note is struck. Through neglect of relaxation, Members of Congress are "anxious, capricious and too often failing in bodily strength," whereas British M.P.s, thanks to their love of sport, are "hearty, vigorous men whose heads the snows of Time have gently whitened." Again, unlike Englishmen, "most young Americans expect to build a house in their life-time." But, so far as American women are concerned, the picture presented of home life, pastimes and domestic management is essentially that of bourgeois Nineteenth Century English society.

Certainly, for their reading matter, American ladies relied much on books emanating from London publishers; and, in their guidance, Mrs. Hale and her reviewers were apt to show firmly feminist leanings. New works by eminent males were given scant mention: Carlyle ("everyone reads him if for no other reason than for his quaint expressions") was briefly commended for *Frederick the Great*, and *Enoch Arden*, it was conceded, had beauties despite "the humble origin of the story and the consequent simplicity of style in which the painful events are narrated." Robert Browning was less lucky: his "versification" was pronounced to be "formal, stiff and unpleasant, and, by readers unpractised in the conjugation of verbs, hard to be understood and, in some cases, painfully mysterious." Robert Owen ("peculiar ideas repugnant to the sincere Christian") was summarily dismissed as unsuitable for the best drawing-rooms. Only Ruskin, with *Sesame and Lilies*, and, oddly enough, Swinburne's *Atalanta*—"a work of chastened genius"—earned the right to more than a few inches of Mrs. Hale's space.

On books by women the reviewers tended to become lyrical, and space was unrationed. Christina Rossetti's "eminently suggestive" poems were matched only by the works of Jean Inglelow, "the most vigorous and original living poet—tender, truthful, beautiful and touching." Columns were devoted to the praise of women's novels on which the dust of oblivion now lies thick. Not that the reviewers wholly forgot their duty to be critical: a Mrs. Trafford Whitehead, for instance, was guilty of "English ideas which will not meet with entire sympathy in this country." Above all, Mrs. Hale was quick to detect, even in the work of an authoress, lapses from moral grace. Madame de Stael troubled her deeply: *Corinne* "overflows with beauty, poetical, sentimental and descriptive, yet displays a baleful trace of French perverted ideas".

Even English feminine pens could not always be trusted. In 1864, the Editress had noted with satisfaction that, thanks to woman's influence, immoral works in England were few, and works "of an improving tendency" numbered at least half as many as those "of an exciting nature, but not positively immoral." But, alas, by 1866 the worm was at work: Miss Braddon, whose earlier writings had been so much admired, had begun, in *The Lady's Mile,* to "subvert the whole system of established romantic literature" by dealing with themes from which it "requires but a brief step forward to attain the licence and abandon which is the special privilege of French novelists."

How far, one wonders, did the publisher share the moral idealism of his Editress? He emerges in "Godey's Arm Chair" as a shrewd businessman, interested in a wide range of affairs. He firmly declines to exchange free copies of his magazine for poetry; and authors of rejected contributions, a list of which was published monthly, were bade remember that he had "'several thousand dollars invested in MSS which we have little chance of using." He disapproved strongly of subscribers who lent their copies to tight-wad friends; and, as for critics of his subscription rate: "Who weighs the difference of a few cents cannot appreciate our Magazine and we don't want him!" To correspondents his replies were terse and strict: raffles were immoral, tight-lacing a cause of red noses, kissing—except in "sanctioned intimacy"—improper. Yet he was no kill-joy. Clergymen, in his broad-minded view, though barred by their cloth from entering a theatre, did not transgress if they read Shakespeare aloud.

He appears, in fact, to have had a very open mind on many subjects and the same sort of curiosity as Lord Northcliffe's. Was Dr. Dewees of Boston right in warning the public that the skins of raisins cannot be mastered by any stomach save that of the ostrich? Was it true, as Dr. Julius von dem Fischweiler of Magdeburg asserted, that by placing one's bed with its head to the North one attracted the passage of a magnetic current which increased the energy of the vital principle? Mr. Godey did not know; but on these and similar mysteries he was happy to speculate in print. On certain matters, however, he had decided views—for example, on the virtues of the preparations of a Mr. Upham, pimple remover, and on the merits (emphasised monthly) of a gas-consuming cooking-stove—manufactured by one Mr. Spear—whose abundant advantages were endorsed from China by a lady missionary. One would be sorry to connect Mr. Godey's enthusiasms with the fact that Messrs. Upham and Spear advertised in his columns, but it is hard to resist the suspicion that he was an early adept in the art of bestowing editorial support on the deserving. After all, he could fairly plead that he gave Mrs. Hale's blue-stockinged legs a good run for his money.

OETIE CATENBURG

STORMY NIGHT

Is this the street? Never a sign of life,
The swinging lamp throws everything about;
But see! From that sly doorway, like a knife
The gilt edge of inviting light slides out
And in again,—the very sign
Of her whose slightest nod I lately thought was mine:

But not now.
Knock! And the night-flowering lady
Opens, and across the brilliant sill
Sees me standing there so dark and shady
Hugging the silences of my ill-will;
Wildly she turns from me—But no, my love,
This foot's within the door, this hand's without the glove.

Well may you tremble now, and say there was nothing meant,
And curl away from my care with a 'Please, my dear!',
For though you were smoke, sucked up by a raging vent,
I'd follow you through every flue of your fear,
And over your ivying arms I'll mountain and cone
In a pillar of carolling fire and fountaining stone.

O strike the gong of your wrong, raise the roof of your rage,
Fist and foist me off with a cloud of cries,
What do I care for all your footling rampage?
On your light-in-gale blows my larking caresses will rise,
But—Why so still? What! are you weeping, my sweet?
Ah heart, heart, look—I throw myself at your feet.

W. R. RODGERS

The Arts and Entertainment

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS

HISTORIANS of music and biographers of Gluck concur, almost to a man, in regarding *Iphigénie en Tauride* as the crown of his life's work. Opportunities of putting this view to the test of a stage performance have been rare, even in France; in England no one seems to have tackled the opera during the present century except (in 1933) the indomitable Ladies of Falmouth. Last week, however, the Oxford University Opera Club, who before the war had already produced *Alceste* and *Iphigénie en Aulide*, continued their excavations with as well-balanced and adequate a performance of the second *Iphigenia* as could reasonably be expected from an amateur group. (Blessed amateurs, who in these fields alone lighten our darkness!) The historians' estimate was amply vindicated by the brave proceedings in the Oxford Town Hall. Of Gluck's five major works, I have now seen four (all but the romantic *Armide*): and of these four, *Iphigénie en Tauride* makes, in the theatre, the most sustained impression of dramatic power and nobility. The second act of *Orfeo*—the descent into the Underworld and the scene in the Elysian Fields—possesses, of course, an ideal beauty which is incomparable; but the first and third acts are relatively weak. In *Iphigénie en Tauride*, on the other hand (henceforth simply *Iphigenia*), the tension created in the opening scene is maintained, almost uninterrupted, throughout all four acts.

For one thing *Iphigenia* has the best libretto Gluck ever set, in Guillard's brilliant adaptation of Euripides to the demands of heroic opera. To a composer like Gluck, the stimulus of a fine text mattered more than to a man of richer invention. In 1779, when *Iphigenia* was first produced, his intelligence and shaping power were at their height; neither then, nor at any other time, were his purely musical gifts equal to those of Handel or Mozart, or even of Weber, who could embellish the ramshackle structures of *Oberon* and *Euryanthe* with the brightest jewels of invention. However much we may adore the muse of Gluck, we must admit that his brain cannot have seethed all day long with musical ideas—themes, figurations, modulations and contrapuntal strands—like the brains of the greatest masters. In sheer invention he is as far below Handel as Hugo Wolf is below Schubert; but, like Wolf, he possessed powers of general culture applied to purely musical ends which enabled him to produce works of unique beauty. It was not merely that he understood how to subordinate details to the whole, and how to translate into terms of music what Winckelmann called the "noble simplicity and calm greatness" of Greek tragedy. Harmonious proportions are certainly a keynote of his work; but he was also capable, throughout his career, of rising musically to the great occasion in a manner which neither Handel nor Mozart could surpass. They could write fine arias by the dozen; but Gluck, when the moment came, could invent *Che farò*, or *Che puro ciel*, or the flute solo in the scene of the Elysian Fields—to name only three sublime passages from *Orfeo* which no one who has once heard them can forget, because they have a quality of timeless, almost impersonal beauty such as Keats discovered in his Grecian urn.

In this *Iphigenia* we are gripped from the outset. There is no true overture; only a few pastoral bars which whip suddenly into a tempest. On the scream of the piccolo the curtain rises: we see Iphigenia and her attendant priestesses, civilised Greeks in exile on the inhospitable Crimean shores, where the inhabitants are cruel, superstitious barbarians. Three times her clear soprano pierces the storm; and three times the opening words of her prayer are echoed by the others. This rhetorical antiphony establishes

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at once the classical style; just as the storm itself (as herald and symbol of a tragic action in which brother and sister are destined to find one another) prefigures, as Martin Cooper observes in his valuable book on the composer, the romantic mood of *Die Walküre*. About this Orestes, who speaks only one proud, sad sentence when (with Pylades) he is dragged on to the stage by the Scythians, there is certainly something of Wagner's unhappy and fatalistic hero. The Greek strangers must die, at the hands of the Greek priestess: that is the situation with which we are left at the end of the first act. It is the following act which is the masterpiece of both librettist and composer.

We discover the two friends imprisoned together. Orestes bitterly reproaches himself: he has brought death upon the one human being in the world who loves him. No sooner has Pylades replied, in his touchingly affectionate A major aria, than they are separated by the temple guards. Immediately we perceive that only the presence of Pylades can keep Orestes sane. Alone, he gives vent to a fearful outburst ("tonnez! écrasez-moi!" he cries, using those high F sharps in which the role abounds); and there follows the passage, quoted in every history of music, in which he mistakes exhaustion for repose, and sings, to a drumming, driving, syncopated orchestral accompaniment, the words "Le calme rentre dans mon cœur!" This passage created the utmost astonishment among Gluck's contemporaries, one of whom relates the old composer's reply to a bewildered questioner: "He lies! he has killed his mother!"; and to-day it still makes a thrilling effect in the theatre. As Orestes lies unconscious, the Furies appear; their sinister pantomime constitutes a scene of hallucinatory power, at the climax of which the matricide believes that he sees Clytemnestra herself; but it is in fact Iphigenia. The scene in which she questions him about the fate of the House of Atreus is extraordinarily dramatic; the more so because his awful revelations stop short at his own identity. When Orestes is led away we reach one of those great climactic monologues of which I have spoken. A throbbing accompaniment begins, with an accent on the third beat of each bar; and the oboe (an instrument which plays a capital role throughout the opera) distils a serene G major cantilena, which the soprano answers: "O malheureuse Iphigénie." Once again, as in *Che farò*, Gluck turns to the calm major key to express the nobility of great sorrow. Characteristic, too, is the simplicity of the means by which the sublime effect is achieved; no less so, the fact that the material of the aria comes from his earlier opera, *La Clemenza di Tito*. The third act belongs more definitely to the world of French heroic opera; the last, from Iphigenia's passionate "Je t'implore et je tremble" to the end, is magnificent.

Professor Westrup directed this immensely important revival with fervour and scholarship; what we heard was what Gluck wrote, free from cuts or additions. This may seem a small virtue; but just think of Salzburg's disgraceful *Idomeneo!* The undergraduate orchestra played remarkably well, and the conductor excelled in the more brilliant and vivid scenes; where he falls short is in that *lyrical* sense of theatrical atmosphere which dictates the moment for broadening, for pausing, for ensuring that the whole house has taken the point of a phrase, or felt the change in emotional colour. His cast was admirably chosen. This music is exceptionally difficult for amateur singers, because of the authority and grandeur of style demanded, and also because of the unusually high pitch of the writing, not only in the soprano and tenor roles, but in that of the two so-called basses. Simon Mosley sustained the heavy role of Orestes with clarity and intelligence; Brian Anderson gave a more than reasonable account of the taxing arias of Pylades; and Donald Watt effectively conveyed the superstitious cruelty of the Scythian King, Thoas. As the heroine, Barbara Rawson improved from act to act; her last aria was really imposing. The setting was simple and effective; and after Covent Garden one was positively glad of a little under-production for a change. It is true that a good many points were missed; but none were made at the expense of Guillard or Gluck.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

THE MOVIES

"The Spider and the Fly," at Marble Arch Odeon

"Martin Roumagnac," at the Rialto

Mr. Robert Hamer is that rare—that, among film-makers, almost unheard-of—thing, a romantic ironist. No wonder his *Kind Hearts and Coronets* took us delightfully by surprise: how much nearer its farcical elegance came to the spirit of Wilde or Beerbohm than the screen versions of *Dorian Gray* and *Lady Windermere's Fan* between which it happened to be sandwiched! Like others who enjoyed the film, I wasted no time in obtaining a copy of the original—Roy Horniman's novel *Israel Rank*—to discover there a fascinating but less lively pursuit of the criminal dandy. The particular fun and wit of *Kind Hearts* were Mr. Hamer's own. Besides directing the film, he had written the script; and in general this was a brilliantly if unevenly *written* film which, like one of Guitry's, found its continuity in the spoken narrative. At times the characters and movements before our eyes did little more than adumbrate, prettily or sardonically, a tone of voice, a witticism, a milestone in reminiscence; but that little was usually enough. The whole piece cut capers new and delectable to English taste; and for months afterwards I was haunted by the devilish misprint in my own notice of it, which ascribed a certain lack of energy to the principal actor's gestures and *lines*, where I had intended *tones*. This new film of Hamer's, *The Spider and the Fly*, would, I had hoped, give me unusual pleasure as well as the chance of remedying a mild affront.

That expectation is to some extent cheated: indeed, one is likely to enjoy *The Spider and the Fly* more without its brilliant predecessor at the back of one's mind. To begin with, at any rate, it is a very subdued Hamer in control: the romantic without the irony and the director of a script not his own. The situations in Paris, Eng., develop an Edwardian charm: there is the very gentlemanly if ruthless chief of police (Eric Portman), and the even more gentlemanly cat-burglar (Guy Rolfe), who enjoy a neutral ground in Bouillabaisse and meet at cafés and love the same beautiful lady (Nadia Grey). Well, with a background of prison and roof-climbing, that is quite pretty, though not quite pretty enough, because the dialogue doesn't clench and the tale drags. Where are salt, gesture, style? It is Baroness Orczy rather than Wilde; or the dashing romance, say, as the Baron Orczy, loyally if a trifle impatiently, might have envisaged it. Is Mr. Hamer's tongue in his cheek? Not so that you'd enjoy it; and the eternal triangle tinkles on and the years jerk forward till with the date "August 1914" ominously flashed up one is inclined to reach with a damn-it for one's hat. But here in fact is the film's turning-point—for the better, for the best; still tugging and fumbling at times it does for a full twenty minutes and more come into its own. So sweet is this reversal or solution (which I shan't give away) that we might wonder whether, looking back, we shouldn't find dulcets and shades missed at the time. One looks back to find them still missing. I've no doubt they were there in Mr. Hamer's mind; and next time he must hurry to admit us to his lurking entertainment.

For the sake of its old favourites, Dietrich and Gabin, any filmgoer could drop in for a happy half-hour of *Martin Roumagnac*. Didn't *she* once walk on high heels into the desert, and hasn't *he* met death with the last match struck and the cigarette chain complete? Well, here they are, Beauty and the Beast, Lady Chatterley and her lover in the barn, as quintessential and radiant as ever. Our frizzy, lidded, long-legged dream never achieved better. But the film? Oh lord, oh lord, take it away!

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

RADIO NOTES

THE Goethe celebrations have constituted, I suppose, the most ambitious and difficult, if not positively the most extensive building project that the Third Programme has attempted so far. What has been achieved is like an impressive if sadly evanescent Gothic cathedral, the two parts of the MacNeice-Stahl *Faust* constituting the nave and chancel, and the innumerable (as they seem) subsidiary programmes bearing to this the relation of so many chapels, oratories and baptistries of very varying form and comeliness, together with one or two structures the murkiness of which was chiefly suggestive of catacombs and crypts. In the later talks at least, the specialists appeared to me to come off better than the polymaths, a state of affairs doubtless quite without appropriateness to the case. Stephen Spender, for example, gave us what were assuredly matured convictions on Goethe, but with an indefinable air of being ready, on the mere drop of a handkerchief, to give us matured convictions on any other sufficiently cultural theme. It is a fact that the "intellectual" on the continental model—of whom Goethe himself is in a sense the archetype—rarely thrives in England; the atmosphere is ungenial and the organism barely viable. This indeed has been Goethe's own position among us. *Werther*, as J. Isaacs reminded us in a learned and lively talk, caused a furore in England as everywhere else. But Charles Lamb believed *Faust* to be "a disagreeable canting tale of seduction," and Carlyle's Goethe, even with a forged birth certificate suggesting origins not far from Ecclefechan, was never very abundantly taken to either Scottish or English hearts. Thus if Brandes's verdict be true, namely, that the culture of a nation may be gauged by its appreciation of Goethe, we are probably in perilous case even after the B.B.C. has done its best for us. L. A. Willoughby, in a capital talk on "Why the British have Neglected Goethe," explained that Goethe regularly writes "with a hardly perceptible smile hovering round his lips." No wonder, then, that we find him a little hard to take. No considerable English writer has behaved in such a way—and Chaucer, despite the literary histories, least of all.

It was pleasant to slip across the Rhine and hear from Professor E. Renoir his early impressions of his famous uncle. Most people know how the painter, like Titian, continued to work to the last, his brushes tied to his crippled hands. But I, at least, was ignorant of the criterion by which he judged whether a picture was finished: he stopped painting when he felt that the buttocks were ready to smack.

This is what children call a rude story; rude in another sense was Bertrand Russell's anecdote, familiar from *The Amberley Papers*, of how the Duchess of Cambridge picked up Kate Amberley's petticoats to see if they were dirty—this because she had been associating with Americans. Nobody at present on the air comes near Russell in dexterously mingling family and other reminiscences with speculative and polemical matter. But this is only one of his supremacies. The wit with which he started off the series "The United States and Europe" had the lightness and temper of a Toledo blade. It ranged from a deadly exposition of the likely utility to policemen of Dewey's substituting for the concept of Truth that of "Warranted Accredibility," to the observation that God is by no means at a discount in America, being, on the contrary, widely regarded as a help in church work.

This year, it appears, the Chinese are commemorating the 2,500th anniversary of the birth of Confucius. With us the occasion is passing off quietly, celebrated so far only by an able if chilly talk by W. A. C. H. Dobson. The studios

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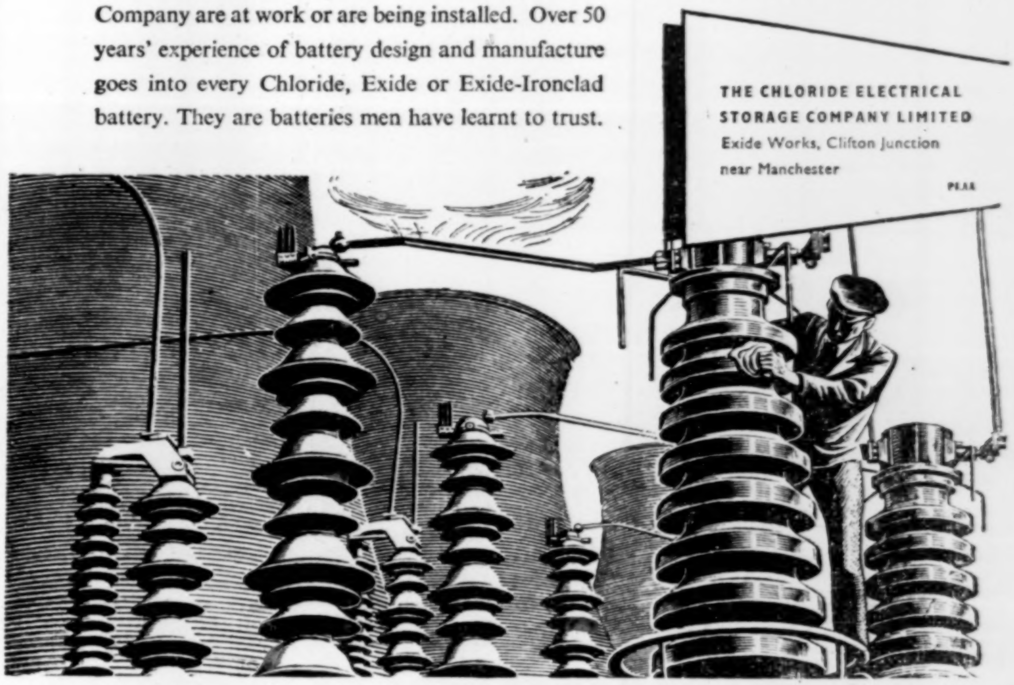

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presumably are being cleared for Wordsworth, who died on the 23rd of April, 1850. I am asking Father Christmas for a spirited production of *The Borderers*, a reading of the entire *Prelude*, professors in moderation, and no polymaths.

MICHAEL INNES

Recent Acquisitions, IV, at Tooth's

This interesting exhibition includes work by painters as diverse as Zoffany, Gauguin, Vuillard and Richard Wilson, Pieter Janssens and Fantin-Latour. Most beautiful is the Courbet *Vue d'Ornans* (No. 7). In it boldness and subtlety complement one another; such a paradoxical mixture of romanticism and realism is Courbet at his best. With its varied greens and cold greys richly applied in flat, shiny paint this is a far meatier and more satisfying picture than any Pissarro or Sisley, which it anticipates by some twenty years. But the level was not always quite so high; we need only look at *Le Lac de Genève* (No. 26), a late picture by Courbet, done during his exile. The earlier is magnificently taut, the later is flabby and prettily sentimental. A fine curiosity is the early Signac seascape (No. 8), a very bright and loosely painted picture, for its date, 1884. Another remarkable French picture, dating from some fifteen years later, is the Degas pastel *La Toilette* (No. 16), similar in subject and conception to the familiar Courtauld picture *Après le Bain*—and very nearly as fine. Among the English exhibits, the large Bonington of the *Grand Canal, Venice* (No. 3), a comparatively unknown though a most important picture. An impressive work is the Marcellus Laroon *Black Prince* (No. 11), a strange surprise coming from this rare figure, an actor and professional soldier turned painter, whom one usually associates with polite conversation pieces. An oddly mannered background of tree-trunks leaning like buttresses sets off two finely painted foreground figures; the result is the equivalent of Strawberry Hill Gothic, only without any of the sensationalism. This exhibition is better than any of its predecessors.

"Fumed Oak" and "Fallen Angels," at the Ambassadors

The twin Hermiones, Miss Baddeley and Miss Gingold, have adopted two early and small Coward plays and made them scandalously their own. But the plays would hardly have stood up on their merits at this date and they serve wonderfully well as a virtuoso display for these brilliant comediennes. It would be worth every penny of half a guinea simply to see the one moment when Miss Gingold's enormously big black-shod feet titupp across the room under hangings of black silk: or that other when Miss Baddeley is painfully hitched as she squeezes herself inch by inch into a dress too tight for her. But the evening is crammed full with such brilliant comic inventions. Business with apples, with hats, with telephones, with shoes is beautifully built up and timed, and these two play up to each other superbly. Prolonged revue sketches? Perhaps; but not prolonged a moment too long.

'Les Peintres Gravures,' at the Redfern Gallery

The sub-title of this exhibition of 312 lithographs and monotypes in colour (of which more than half are priced at 10 guineas or under) reads "French and English . . ." But "English and French" would for once have been justifiable, since the English more than hold their own—if we discount Renoir, Rouault, Braque, Bonnard and Vuillard. That is, subtract from the French the world-famous old masters of modern painting and compare the remainder with their young English contemporaries: one finds the English at least equal in pure formal power and a good deal more exciting in their subject matter. Keith Vaughan's *Landscape* at once stands out; full of the present month's rotting mists and luminous damp. A huge orange sun looks over the edge of a grey-green world and, having looked, departs again below the horizon of his coming. England in December—and Vaughan has stated it in olive, brown, orange, white and black Colquhoun and MacBryde are interesting, as usual. Such titles as *Siena Palio* or *To the Tomb of Julius II* are indicative of a recent Italian journey: but the southern influence does not extend further than the titles. Ceri Richards's preoccupation with grand pianos continues and some of his lithographs of the *Girl at a Piano* kind have a unity of texture and a charm of swiftly managed design which are not always evident in his paintings. Perhaps the imposed flatness of colour here is a help to him: it introduces a calm element of which his compositions, with their violent movement, probably stand in need. Bryan Wynter is one of our most cunning lithographic artists and his monotype, *Herring-gull,* is expressive of the soul of this round-eyed, greedy jet-fighter of a bird. Wynter knows all about seagulls: unlike some artists, he makes birds out of triangles—not the other way round. For abstract figures that create a sense of space Robert Adams's new monotypes should be consulted. *Boy Behind an Aquarium* by Denis Wirth-Miller is a thing of charm, and is constructed entirely of alternating squares of dark blue and white, all an eighth of an inch in width. In black and white, Pasmore's *Abstract I* communicates a mysterious and beautiful unfolding of forms of an unidentifiable nature. The thing has the rhythmic fascination of the *sgraffito* decoration on a Sung pot; and the touch is as rare and fine. A most sensitive hand is also evident in *Flowers in a Vase* by Hitchens.

Correspondence

SCOTTISH COVENANT

SIR,—Mr. Neil McCallum's neat and objective report on the Scottish Covenant is very welcome. London newspapers have decided that this abnormal beat in the heart of the British Commonwealth is of no clinical importance. In this they are wrong.

London opinion has become so committee-ridden and personality-ridden that it has forgotten that there is such a thing as democracy. It asks, "Who is behind all this?" It runs over its little list of Samurai and finds that most of the components are silent or hostile. That is enough. It goes to sleep again. It may even be soothed by Mr McCallum's words, "Scottish Whiggery". It should consult its dictionary.

It is a fact that, within a few days of the launching of the Covenant, over quarter of a million adult Scots had declared for a Scottish Parliament. This happened without the help of propaganda, as it is nowadays understood, and in the teeth of the Party Line. The sponsors were not V.I.P.s and the total expenses were well below £500.

There is no possible doubt that the signatories will very soon pass the million mark and that this is a completely spontaneous democratic movement. The attempt of the Secretary of State to play it down and the attempt of the Tory party to cash in on it have equally been ludicrous failures. The Scots have always examined carefully and supported loyally the standard political theories; but they have always been critical of "bosses." They are soberly and quietly deciding that they want to manage their own affairs, and no directives or whips will divert them from this purpose.

It is very high time that London opinion and Parliament itself woke up to this phenomenon.

Rockbank,
Helensburgh,
Dumbartonshire.

JAMES BRIDIE

SIR,—Mr. Neil McCallum is hardly right in stating that "at the last annual meeting of the Scottish Council of the Labour Party the 'Scottish Question' was killed as a party matter." All that happened there was that the Conference rejected a suggestion that the National Executive of the Labour Party be asked to hold an enquiry into devolution. That the old policy of "a Scottish Parliament for Scottish Affairs" was not thereby abandoned is indicated by the speeches of most of the Scots Labour M.P.s who took part in the debate on the adjournment on November 16th, when Niall Macpherson asked for a Royal Commission or Speaker's Conference on devolution. The Speaker ruled out mention of a Scottish Parliament as involving legislation, but several Labour M.P.s indicated their support of it. The Government spokesmen rejected an inquiry on the grounds that the relevant facts were already sufficiently known, or else too difficult and expensive to discover at present.

It is true that the Secretary of State, Mr. Woodburn, made some absurd observations, e.g. that bomb-throwing extremists were associated with the Scottish National Assembly, which met in the hall of the General Assembly of the Established Kirk, and whose covenant was signed by such men as Tom Johnston, long the chief brain of Scottish Labour, and Lord Boyd-Orr, a Nobel peace-prize winner. But no one took him seriously.

At the moment, the Covenant, with no organising machine to run it, has been signed by over 400,000 individuals, a remarkable instance of a spontaneous demonstration of *volonté générale.*" Some of them are Socialist M.P.s who remember old Labour promises to Scotland.

Makarsbield, Tayport.

DOUGLAS YOUNG

FRENCH NORTH AFRICA

SIR,—In discussing French North Africa in your issue of November 19th, your correspondent made the common error of disregarding entirely the Berber (Kabyle-speaking) majority in both Algeria and Morocco. I can give him the names of quite a few Berber towns and cafés in, say, Algiers, in which he would receive very rough treatment if he told the company they were Arabs and should tie themselves to the Arab League. The tendency of North African Nationalism, except in Tunisia, since the Palestine debacle has been to disregard the Arab League as a "liberating" agency. This is probably only a temporary phenomenon, but it explained the tremendous welcome given by the North African native population to President Auriol a few months ago.

North Africa presents Socialists with an interesting problem. Should one press for a French withdrawal and contemplate the substitution of stagnation *à la* Jordan (and enervating corruption *à la* Levant) for the present economic progress but political illiberalism under the French? Or should one support French "imperialism" and recognise the truth that almost everything worthwhile—from the economic and medical angles, anyhow—in Algeria to-day is a French creation and that, but for France, Morocco would still be the "China of the West" as it was up to thirty-five years ago? Spanish Morocco is a different question, for the Spaniards have done nothing but establish military dictatorship without even offering economic progress to sugar the pill. But Algeria and Morocco have much in common with Palestine—with the French in the role of the Zionists.

The Arabs, it might be argued, would prefer stagnation under a North-African "Abdulla" to the positive advantages of their connection with France—though on the strength of my daily contacts here with Palestinian Arabs and Jordanians I should challenge this view. In Syria and Lebanon this summer I was impressed by the almost pathetic eagerness of both Syrians and Lebanese for a renewal of French "influence" (it was thought that the Zaim coup would bring this about) to rescue these states from the corruption, nepotism and economic chaos independence had brought about. French officers on the U.N. truce-observation staff were openly fêted in public. And a majority of Algerians and Moroccans, as I have pointed out, are not Arabs. They hold themselves to be incomparably superior beings and are certainly of better physique, more active and more intelligent than the Arabs around them.

I have said nothing about Tunisia because this "Protectorate" is indeed a depressing place. Here the Arabs are in a majority and France's administrators are not inspiring. The country was still only beginning to recover from the ravages of the Beni Hillal 900 years ago when war ruined it for a second time. Nevertheless, the French working against terrible odds have much to their credit. Under French rule Tunisia's population has increased as fast as that of Arab Palestine under the British mandate: the two Arab communities vie for the world record in this sphere. But for a generation to come Tunisia is bound to be a strain for France—already, since 1945, Paris has poured more francs than it can afford into Tunisian reconstruction—and if it were not for the dangerous precedent that would be established, the French would be wise to evacuate the territory.

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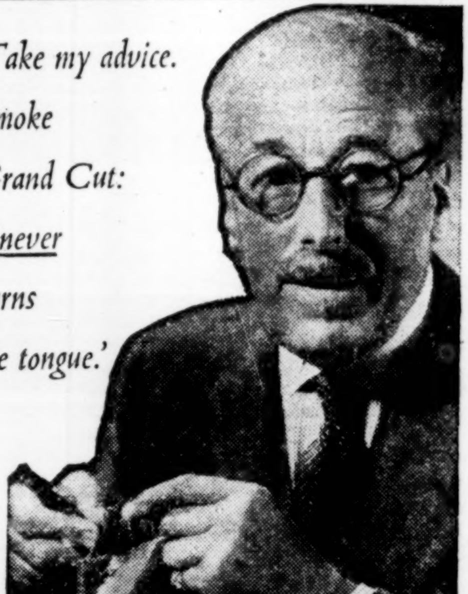

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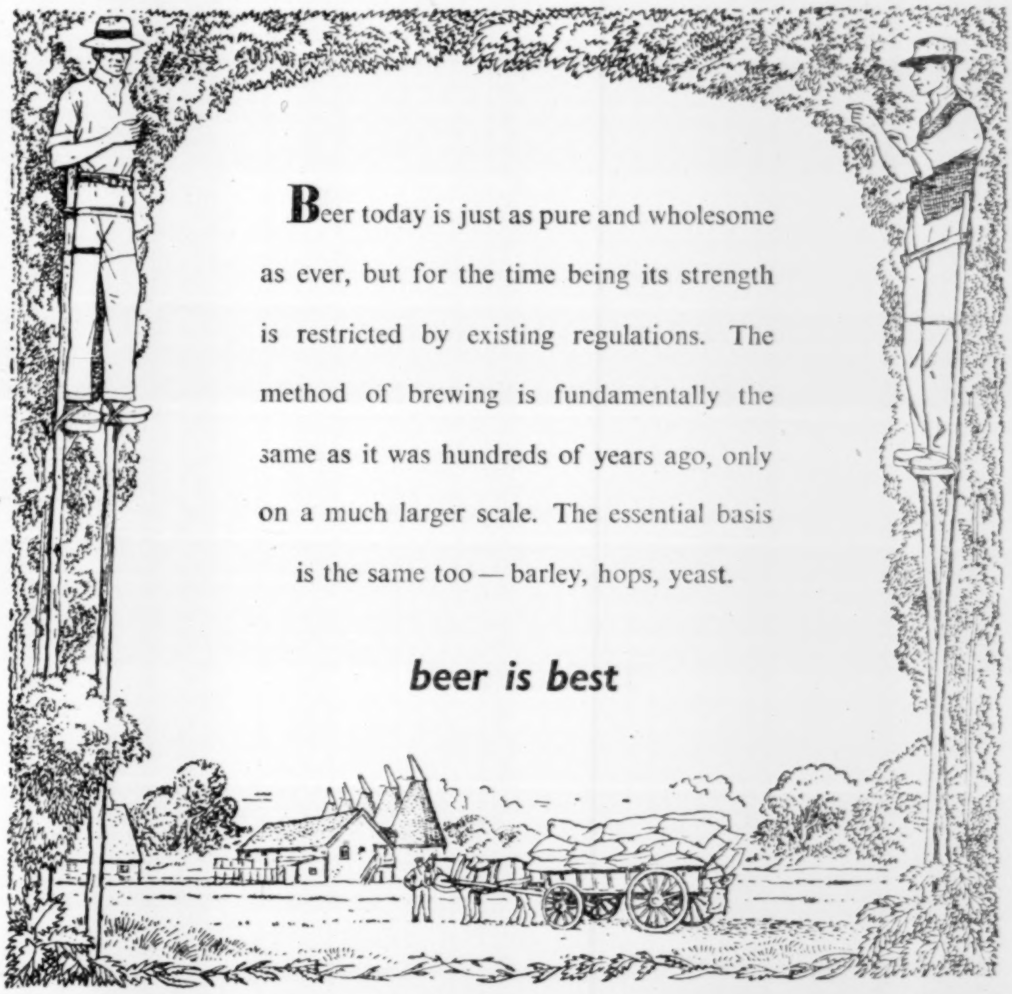

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EVOLUTION

Sir,—In your issue of December 3rd, Geoffrey Taylor, reviewing the Oxford Junior Encyclopaedia, said that that work "very properly" refers to Evolution as a "supposition."

This could properly have been asserted a century or perhaps two-thirds of a century ago: to-day it is as absurd as it would be to say that the atomic theory of matter is a supposition.

The fact of biological evolution—the fact that the types of organism alive to-day have developed by slow change from different and on the whole simpler types—has been for some time as well established as the comparable fact of human pre-history and history.

And the theory of evolution, the body of concepts which subsumes the various facts and gives a coherent naturalistic explanation of them, has in the last twenty-five or thirty years been much developed, thanks to advances in genetics, taxonomy, ecology, paleontology, and mathematical selection theory, and is now more than ever the pivot of general biology.

31 Pond Street, N.W.3. Julian Huxley

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Sir,—I read with considerable interest a letter over the signature "D.M.R." in your issue of November 26, and, speaking as a prefect at a large (and overcrowded) provincial Grammar School, I feel I should present another aspect of the problem as I see it at first hand.

"D.M.R.'s" letter comes from the (comparatively) civilised and well-disciplined *milieu* of one of our Public boarding-schools; in consequence, he shows himself quite unaware of the disciplinary problems in schools lacking the continuous tradition and general tone of the great Public Schools. Certainly, I have little sympathy for the system of "beating brains through bottoms"; but academic prowess, or the lack of it, is only one side of the life of a school.

As a prefect, I often come into contact with a certain type of boy completely and arrantly scornful of the elementary principles of decent conduct, and often capable of callous hooliganism and bullying of the most brutal kind. I can only suppose that "D.M.R." would attempt to reform such a boy, first by gently reasoning with him and appealing to his hypothetical better self, and then by use of impositions and detention; with due respect for "D.M.R.'s" humanistic principles, I can assure him that he would retire, humiliated. These "problem children", to use a polite phrase, may possibly be the result of a malignant environment; but a terrorised second-former—and the term, I assure you, is no exaggeration—is rarely consoled by the thought that his oppressor is the victim of cruel circumstance. Whatever sordid details may be in the background, the good of the majority of the school, and particularly the safety of the defenceless younger boys, must be the prime consideration; a large Grammar School is no place for "working off" repressions. Corporal punishment, repeated if necessary, can do much to keep in check hooliganism and bullying; moreover, little else can do so, now that no canker may be summarily removed before it has reached the school-leaving age, destroying in its growth only too much healthy tissue. By their very activities these abominations perpetuate themselves in the younger boys whom they brutalise and demoralise.

Evidently "D.M.R." has not previously discovered these few facts of life during his sheltered childhood. He may now possibly be willing to abrogate his principles a little, take a slightly more realistic view of his subject, and admit that corporal punishment can carry out a very definite, if utilitarian and limited, function.

I withold my name to avoid embarrassment to my superiors. Praefectus

TEACHERS' SALARIES

Sir,—The refusal of the Burnham Committee to increase teachers' salaries has given the impression that the demand was a whim on the part of a body of people unaware of dollar difficulties and economic crises. Your readers should know that, for many years, a quarter of a million teachers have been asking for a standard of living appropriate to a profession whose expensive training lasts many years. While they do not expect the £3,000 a year that doctors and dentists (with a somewhat similar period of training) are being given without the asking, they would like a salary that would bring their incomes up to the subsistence level now enjoyed by policemen, dustmen and skilled workers.

How many of your readers know that teachers are scarcely able to pay their shabby-genteel way? A single man, beginning as a qualified teacher, takes home (after the usual deductions of Income Tax, Superannuation and Insurance) just £4 15s. 0d. a week; a married man £5 2s. 6d. Should the teacher have spent some years at a University, he gets £5 8s. 0d. as a single man, with an extra eight shillings if he is married.

Unlike other workers, teachers have not yet urged their grievance by a strike—the usual method of proving that one is indispensable—for education, though as indispensable as medicine and the necessities of life, is not a commodity that would be missed *in the short run*. But, although they cannot threaten the community with toothache, gastritis or unheated homes, nor compel the country to walk to work, they cannot help, unfortunately, but convey a sense of frustration to their pupils with consequent disastrous results to the quality of future recruits to the teaching profession.

W. Ivor Adams

THE WARSAW RISING

Sir,—I was very interested to read in your issue of November 26th, some further comments by Critic which correct some of the statements given by him in his previous London Diary about the Warsaw Rising.

May I permit myself to add the following.

Critic writes: ". . . the actual instructions which immediately led to the rising came, I think, from General Anders in London."

This assertion is not correct. I did not and I could not give any order of this kind. At the time of the Warsaw rising I was not Commander-in-Chief, Polish Forces in London, but was in Italy performing my duties as Commander of the 2nd Polish Corps then in action. Moreover, I was personally against starting the rising in 1944, being convinced that the Soviet armies would not come to the aid of Polish underground forces or even co-operate with rescue action. Lt. General W. Anders, C.B.

[Critic writes: "In putting me right about his personal whereabouts General Anders says nothing to affect the point under discussion. I raised, tentatively, the question how far the call to rise against the Germans in Warsaw came effectively from Moscow or from the Anders organisation in London."—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

COMMUNIST CONGRESS

Sir,—If you had had to rely on the ordinary press for your information about the 21st Congress of the Communist Party, a mis-statement such as is contained in your note "Communists in Congress" might be pardoned, since a virtual boycott was imposed on news of the Congress. But your note implies that you have looked at Mr. Pollitt's report, and presumably you would not venture to comment on the Congress without at any rate reading the *Daily Worker* reports of its proceedings.

It is therefore difficult to understand how you could attempt to "prove" that "There will not be any working unity" with the Communists by writing such a phrase as the following: "The rest of their policy is too much their own—and the Cominform's—to permit collaboration with the 'so-called Lefts,' who came in for round after round of abuse."

The only sentence of Mr. Pollitt's report which might conceivably form the basis for your remarks is one in which he refers to "the former Left Social Democrats like Cole and Laski." But in a report of 15,000 words, this one sentence can hardly merit the description of "round after round of abuse."

Of course there are genuine Lefts in the Labour Movement, the most courageous of whom have already been expelled from the Labour Party. So far from considering that there is no possibility of working unity with non-Communists who are gravely disturbed at the drive to war, the approaching slump and the attack on working-class standards, the Communist Party placed this issue of working-class unity as a central one for the movement, because, in the words of Mr. Pollitt's report, "unless we do get together, we shall be taken separately by capitalism and separately defeated."

There can be no doubt that this lesson will be learnt in the coming period, and the Communist Party's appeal for working-class unity will certainly "make sense" (as you say of its programme) to the militant workers. George Matthews

The Communist Party, *Assistant Secretary*
King Street,
Covent Garden, W.C.2.

A WISE CHANGE OF PLAN

Sir,—In your approval of the Labour Party Executive's decision to substitute the formula of "mutualisation" for nationalisation in dealing with the problem of industrial insurance, you would seem to have allowed considerations of electoral tactics to have obscured your vision of Socialist strategy.

Nationalisation, as originally proposed, of the Industrial Insurance Companies would transfer into Government hands many hundreds of millions of pounds-worth of industrial investments and real estate. With these in its hands a Socialist Government could really go ahead with Socialist economic planning (and with some town-planning and housing projects otherwise hardly practicable). Without them such a government will remain very largely impotent and subject to various pressures from its declared enemies, among whom the most bitter, and most dangerous, are those which it is now proposing to spare. Seen in this light, the decision must surely be regarded as a retreat, and a major one. Edgar P. Young

103, Lexham Gardens, W.8.

THE CASE OF JOHN HADLOW

Sir,—You now refer to your anonymous correspondent as "John Hadlow," using quotation marks. Did you do so when you first published his letter? Nobody objects to editors maintaining the anonymity of correspondents providing that it is plain that anonymity is being resorted to. But what are the ethics of allowing a correspondent to assume a nom-de-plume in order to make a a very grave charge against the Police in such circumstances that readers will imagine that the accusation is levelled by an eye-witness courageous and assured enough to append his signature to the denunciation?

Is that consistent with the duty of an editor to his readers, apart from his obligations to a contributor?

Carlton Club, Henry Maxwell
69, St. James's St., S.W.1.

[When a letter is not signed by the real name of the correspondent the fact, in our view, should be indicated. We usually observe this rule and because we noted after going to press that, on this occasion, we had omitted to do so, we stated on page 349 of our next issue (October 1), before any query had arisen, that "John Hadlow" was "the pseudonym for a well-known police reporter."—Ed. *N.S. & N.*]

SIDNEY WEBB

Sir,—Mr. F. W. Galton recalls the speed and accuracy with which Sidney Webb absorbed Alfred Marshall's principles of economics "one morning in 1893 or 1894."

Webb first read the book in 1890. He reviewed it for the *Star* at the "Urgent" request of H. W. Massingham, then its editor. He wrote to Miss Potter: "I went straight to the Club and read right through Marshall's six hundred pages—got up, staggering under it" (*My Apprenticeship*, Diary, July 27, 1890.) Michael Davie

D.N.B.

Sir,—In an article last week on the new supplement of the Dictionary of National Biography, I attributed the life of Augustine Birrell to Mr. Walter de la Mare. This was a mistake for which I wish to express regret. Augustine Birrell's life was written by the Marquess of Crewe and Mr. R. C. Ensor. Mr. de la Mare contributed the life of Sir Henry Newbolt.

Beauchamp Mansions, Giles Romilly
S.W.3.

BOOKS IN GENERAL

Success was the end of Macaulay's career, confidence the means to it. All his life he knew what he meant to do, and it was not a vulgar ambition. He knew the price, and paid it; knew the rewards, and savoured them. For the long journey to India he chose his books with purpose: "Richardson, Voltaire's works, Gibbon, Sismondi's *History of the French*, Davila, the *Orlando* in Italian, Don Quixote in Spanish, Homer in Greek, Horace in Latin . . ."; and he read them all. In India he planned his economy: from his salary of £10,000 a year as a member of the Supreme Council he saved, in five years, £30,000 on which to live in comfort while he sat in Parliament and wrote his *History*[*]; and that *History*, the ultimate aim of it all, was the most carefully planned of all. It was to be popular—"to supersede the last fashionable novel on the tables of young ladies," but permanent, resting on permanent merits. It was to be perfectly clear—"how little the all-important art of making meaning pellucid is studied now! Hardly any popular writer except myself thinks of it"; and it was to be as accurate as research and method could make it. Such finality is not cheaply acquired. Infinite pains were devoted to it. Macaulay studied the methods of the great historians, revised his views of Tacitus and Thucydides and sought the lost secret of narrative style. Methodically he estimated his programme: eighteen months of reading and travel, the Dutch and French archives to be ransacked; thousands of pamphlets to be read. Then he would start writing, two pages a day (for easy reading means hard writing) for two years. "Then I reckon a year for polishing, retouching and printing."

To ensure success he refused cabinet office and gave up political life; and when the book at last appeared his fame was instant and immense. Byron and Scott were eclipsed. "Is that Mr. Macaulay?" exclaimed two girls at the Zoo, "Never mind the hippopotamus!" When the third and fourth volumes were published Longmans sold 26,500 copies in ten weeks and sent the author a cheque for £20,000 in the eleventh; and the author, broken in health but sure of immortality, retired to Kensington, there, with his elegant villa and rolling lawn, his carriage and four men-servants, to impress the pilgrims who came to question, to admire, to be entertained. His entertainments were famous. On Anglicans he would press the Michaelmas goose, on Dissenters the fillet of veal, "the recognised Sunday dinner in good old Nonconformist families"; to both he would recite such passages from the *Almanach des Gourmands* as that "after the seventh dozen oysters cease to whet the appetite." Once he was even visited by a deputation of five Quakers, eager to refute his strictures on William Penn. He recorded the incident with his usual complacency. The Quakers, he said, were routed: "they had absolutely nothing to say." As Sir Charles Firth remarked, this is probably because they never had a chance to speak. In fact they were right and Macaulay, on this occasion, demonstrably wrong.

The crown of a man's career is his biography. In this too Macaulay was wonderfully successful. Gibbon was his own best biographer; Macaulay's real liberalism, genuine humanity and disinterested love of learning would never have been revealed by his own too brisk and rhetorical pen. By supreme good fortune he found, in his own nephew, his perfect biographer. Sir George Trevelyan's *Life* is one of the great biographies in our language; and having read it we feel, as after reading Gibbon's autobiography, genuinely glad that the subject was so successful.

The world is jealous of confidence and success: it loves to detect the occasional ignorance of the omniscient, the trivial errors of the infallible; and since Whig views of history lost their absolute supremacy, Tories, Marxists and Catholics have presumed a gleeful revenge. "The Macaulay view of history" has become, in their vocabulary, one of the great exploded myths, as obsolete, they would suggest, as the systems of Ptolemy or Bishop Bossuet. And yet what is this "Macaulay view of history"? A little examination shows that wherever else his critics may have found it, it was not in the works of Macaulay. Macaulay certainly made errors, as every historian does—though surprisingly few—and he further erred in assuming, as no historian can, the finality of his conclusions. He made errors of fact, as over Schomberg's funeral and William Penn, and errors of method, condemning Marlborough on evidence which he found to be mere libel when it condemned William III; he exaggerated for effect and by exaggeration sometimes missed the narrow shades of truth; and his treatment of foreign affairs, compared with that of Ranke, is amateur and provincial. But "the Macaulay view" as supposed by his modern opponents—the view that there was, in the seventeenth century an accepted constitution which the tyrannical Stuarts broke and the virtuous Whigs defended—he never held, and one only has to read him to know it. Like all great historians he seems, as it were, to have reinsured himself against future changes in historical philosophy, and the blows which doctrinaire adversaries have aimed at him damage not him but his inferior imitators. His own philosophy is less easy to assail.

In politics Macaulay believed in three things whose value seemed to him self-evident: honesty, reason and sense. Political honesty was partly the contribution of those great nineteenth-century Evangelicals, the Clapham Sect, to which his own family belonged, and Macaulay, though proud of such a tradition, never claimed for it an earlier pedigree. Rational politics—the politics which removed ancient restrictions, liberated mercantile enterprise, and led to that prosperity upon which any liberal culture must rest—he ascribed to the defeat of the Stuart kings. Political sense consisted, to him, in the recognition that the aim of politics is economic prosperity and liberal but effective administration, not artistic achievement, the triumph of doctrine, or the spread of mumping mysticism. On such a view the Revolution of 1688 was indeed a Glorious Revolution, however achieved, and it was quite unnecessary to maintain either that it was an exclusively Whig achievement or that its makers were necessarily inspired by abstract virtues. Not constitutional precedent but actual consequence was its justification, and Macaulay, convinced that the consequences were indisputably good, was ready to make any concession of fact that the evidence required: evasion of inconvenient evidence he could afford to leave to his neo-Catholic, neo-Tory rivals, who would need it.

The luxury which he allowed himself was not distortion or evasion, but emphasis and relish. Hence those famous passages on James II and his supporters, the backwood squires and parsons, the irreducible rump of the *Ancien Régime*, which caused such an outcry in the manor-houses and rectories of Victorian England. The seventeenth century squire, said Macaulay, was "a man with the deportment, the vocabulary and the accent of a carter, yet punctilious on matters of genealogy and precedence"; his wife and daughter were "in taste and acquirements below a housekeeper or a still-room maid of the present day"; and the chaplain in a great house was traditionally "the resource of the lady's maid whose character had been blown upon, and who was therefore forced to give up hopes of catching the steward." Was this to be borne? cried the prosperous Tory gentry, the comfortable Tory clergy of 1850. Unfortunately it has to be. Controversy and research have modified, but not altered, Macaulay's generalisation; produced exceptions but not invalidated the rule. His offence, was not in reaching wrong conclusions but in so obviously relishing the conclusions that he reached.

For in the end Macaulay is always vindicated by his sense. He understood politics because, like so many of the great Whigs, he had taken part in them. Academic historians have their advantages, but sometimes they can be very silly. Carlyle was fundamentally silly. Macaulay's modern rivals are often silly. Macaulay never was. Essentially a practical politician, he had no use for abstract theories, no sympathy with emotional indulgences, and therefore a restricted understanding of those subtle moods and colours which also illuminate history. Archbishop Laud's careful record of his superstitious dreams filled him with disgust, and he dismissed that proto-martyr of Puseyism as "a ridiculous old driveller." George Fox, the founder of Quakerism, whose compulsive personality shed around him an almost magical illumination, was to Macaulay an indecent exhibitionist, "too much disordered for liberty and not sufficiently disordered for Bedlam." Even Harrington, whom some modern historians regard as the greatest political thinker of his time, he dismissed with contempt; even Locke, the great doctor of the Revolution, he passed over almost in silence.

This hard, practical quality was perhaps Macaulay's greatest limitation: it made him an insensitive critic of art, ideas and religion, on which he nevertheless dogmatised. Even as a historian it limited him: he saw prosperity and good government as the culmination of historical development, and condescended (it is his most tiresome habit) towards the less successful past. Gibbon also believed in his own age, in "the full light and freedom of the eighteenth century," and looked back with complacency on the dark centuries of "Christianity and barbarism"; but Gibbon at least recognised, in the age of the Antonines, a civilisation as mature as his own, and his philosophic mind, was proof against vulgar self-satisfaction. Place Macaulay beside Gibbon and he seems as parochial as Froude beside himself. And yet, since Macaulay was writing not about art, ideas or religion, but about politics, these are but incidental limitations: the boundaries which exclude the beliefs and absurdities of men still preserve the essentials of political history; within them (and they are wide enough) he remains supreme. He chose the most colourful period of English political history, and devoted to its understanding and presentation all his incredible resources of industry and memory, sense, experience and narrative skill. Success so bought is well earned and he remains, after a century of indefatigable historiography and philosophical change, uneclipsed. Besides, he could write, and took trouble to learn the art of writing. Which of his modern critics can claim as much?

H. R. Trevor-Roper

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[*] *The History of England: Chapters I-V.* By T. B. Macaulay. *Harrap.* 6s.
Selected Writings of Macaulay. Edited by Harold Hobson. *Falcon Press.* 5s.

HORIZON

Horizon. Edited by CYRIL CONNOLLY. *2s. 6d.*

" A magazine should be the reflection of its time and one that ceases to reflect it should come to an end." These were the words with which *Horizon* opened its first number in January, 1940. That time was not an easy one to reflect. We had come at last to that broken bridge which all but the deliberately blind had known the lines of their lives were inevitably leading to. And we were gathered staring at the wreckage without very much heart. For if the war had not begun yet to be physically catastrophic, spiritually the bombs had already gone off and had destroyed, almost overnight, the moral structure of a generation. The driving force of the Thirties—that extraordinary mixture of naive idealism and underground fear, of faith, fervour and neurosis which had animated the bulk of writers under forty in smaller or greater degree—this had vanished with an appalling suddenness. It was as if we had put the whole of our energy into the hope that the enemy—however we defined that term—could be defeated without violence. To be proved so catastrophically disappointed was to be left in a complete vacuum.

Such a mood among writers and potential readers was not, on the face of it, propitious for beginning a literary magazine. But the founders of *Horizon*, Mr. Peter Watson, Mr. Cyril Connolly and Mr. Stephen Spender, were clear-sighted enough to see that it was a mood and a time that needed one. The time—the uneasy lull—ensured that the venture was a success: for whether *Horizon* was a success in the material sense, it certainly came to mean something—to stand for something. The mood was reflected in the policy; *Horizon* reasserted the values of art at the very moment when its perpetual enemies had the best reasons for disregarding it.

It was a time not for experimenting but for hanging together. *Horizon* provided a link for all those who had previously relied on the company of people like themselves and now found themselves separated in camps and barracks and provincial deserts, isolated in the loneliness of being different. It was not *avant garde*, but that did not mean that it was unadventurous. The idiosyncrasy of its editor, Cyril Connolly, was stamped upon it. The war numbers, as one looks back at them now, seem extremely lively, if for no other reason, because they kept up so continuously the note of the unexpected. Brilliant, erratic, impertinent and courageous they reflected indirectly the editor's personality, as did, more directly, the comments which he wrote in those days regularly month by month. These delighted because they had all the air of being wayward, spontaneous, uncensored, and how welcome a relief this breeze was across the oily waters of the blandly official and the deadly correct.

Horizon expected to last six months. It has survived ten years and now announces that it will suspend itself for a period of one year and resume only if the times seem more propitious. In the slightly self-pitying note in which the editor tells us of this decision, he asserts that *Horizon* is better edited than ever it was, and blames among other things the " apathy " of his enemy, the reading public. Scolded, we are inclined to " answer back." The quality of the contributions to *Horizon* since the war may have been higher than ever; but the magazine as an entity has become duller, heavier, and less and less personal. During the war it could perhaps afford to leave events to look after themselves, for it couldn't affect them. But, to my mind, a monthly cannot in peace-time turn its back so completely on the current moment. Not only has it not kept up with the immediate events—no chronicle of the arts, theatre, books—but even the editor's monthly comments have shrunk to a trickle. When a magazine ceases to reflect its time. . . The first words of its first issue might also end its obituary.

But certainly the present time is hardly less difficult for a magazine than were the years of *Horizon's* beginning: and we can sympathise—none better—with the editor's difficulties. New writers and new material are hard to come by. Five years after the war there is still no sign of any kind of literary revival; no movements are discernible: no trends. An editor waits in vain to hear a new note, the note of " passion and a point of view." He cannot go on for ever juggling with the same old five or six balls. So *Horizon* closes down and we shall feel the loss of it. Many of us have reason to be grateful, as writers and readers, to its generous founder and its editor. Mr. Connolly can retire, fortified by the gratitude and good wishes of many admirers, to the alternatives which he proposes for himself. Either, he says, he will spend his year writing or he will " return to editing and accept his destiny."

T. C. WORSLEY

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THE GHOST IN THE MACHINE

The Concept of Mind. By GILBERT RYLE. *Hutchinson. 12s. 6d.*

This book, which is having a great vogue at Oxford, is both revolutionary and original. The author's declared object is " not to increase what we know about mind, but to rectify the logical geography of the knowledge which we already possess ", and he disarms those who might object to its polemical tone by saying that the assumptions against which he is arguing are those of which he himself has been a victim. In fact, for a work of modern philosophy, the book is written with considerable distinction. The exposition is clear, the illustrations vivid and abundant, and the incidental observations fresh and acute.

The assumption against which Professor Ryle argues is summed up in his phrase, " the ghost in the machine." By this he means the official doctrine which has dominated philosophy since Descartes—he calls it specifically " a philosopher's myth "—according to which a man is composed of and bifurcated into a mind and a body. Some of his acts are mental acts, some bodily acts; of these the former are private and accessible only to introspection, the latter commonly public and open to observation. To the mind are referred feelings, emotions, ideas and cognitive acts; these are thought to accompany some of our bodily processes, and to cause others. For example, when we talk and think, we commonly hold that it is the body which talks and the mind which thinks. It is the mind so conceived, the accompaniment of bodily acts, which Professor Ryle calls " the ghost in the machine."

The difficulties of the Cartesian view are, of course, no novelty. Nobody, for example, has ever been able to explain how mind and body, conceived as Descartes conceived them, could interact. Moreover, though a man is bifurcated into mental processes and bodily acts, the mysterious transactions between mind and body through which their interaction takes place belong to neither.

Descartes's view was based in part on theological considerations. The contemporary discoveries of physical science were thought to show that the movements of matter were determined. The body was matter; if the mind were part of the body, events in the mind would be determined too. It was known, moreover, what happened to the body at death. These results were distasteful to philosophers who wished to believe that their minds were free, and that their souls survived the break-up of their bodies. Hence Descartes's introduction of the sharp distinction which is responsible for the notion of " the ghost in the machine." The Cartesian conception was reinforced by theories of knowledge which, as Professor Ryle points out in a chapter of first-rate importance on the intellect, have habitually postulated cognitive acts and processes, such as making judgments, having ideas, abstracting and passing from premises to conclusions. Since none of these was a thing which a man could be observed doing, " it seemed necessary to locate these acts on the boards of a stage to which only he had access." This stage is the mind.

Professor Ryle's book is a sustained attack on this conclusion, which he charges with being based on " a category mistake " which assigns both mind and body to the common category of things or stuffs, although they are conceived to be things or stuffs of different kinds. But, Professor Ryle argues, the mind is not a thing or stuff which exists over and above the overt acts of the body, any more than the University of Oxford exists as something over and above its Colleges, in the same way as that in which the Colleges exist, or the team spirit exists as something over and above the members of the cricket team in the same way as the members of the team exist. There are different senses of the word " existence " indicating different categories, and the logical category in which mind can be said to exist is different from that in which the body can be said to exist, as the logical category of the team spirit is different from the logical category of the members of the team.

One of the most familiar functions of " the ghost in the machine " is the formulation of propositions in which knowledge is traditionally thought to be expressed. When we formulate a proposition, we commonly suppose that in addition to the formulation and the knowledge there is somebody, the ghost, that *makes* the formulation and *has* the knowledge. Professor Ryle's comment is to make an interesting distinction between knowing how and knowing that, that is to say, between knowing a proposition and knowing how to do something. We call people and animals intelligent because they possess certain skills, know, that is to say, how to do certain things; but the possession of a skill is not accompanied by verbal propositions. The good tennis player does not when playing formulate to himself the proposition that he will next hit the ball into his opponent's backhand corner, any more than the good boxer thinks that he will next hit his opponent above the diaphragm. Here, then, are cases in which no ghost is attending our acts of doing and accompanying them with

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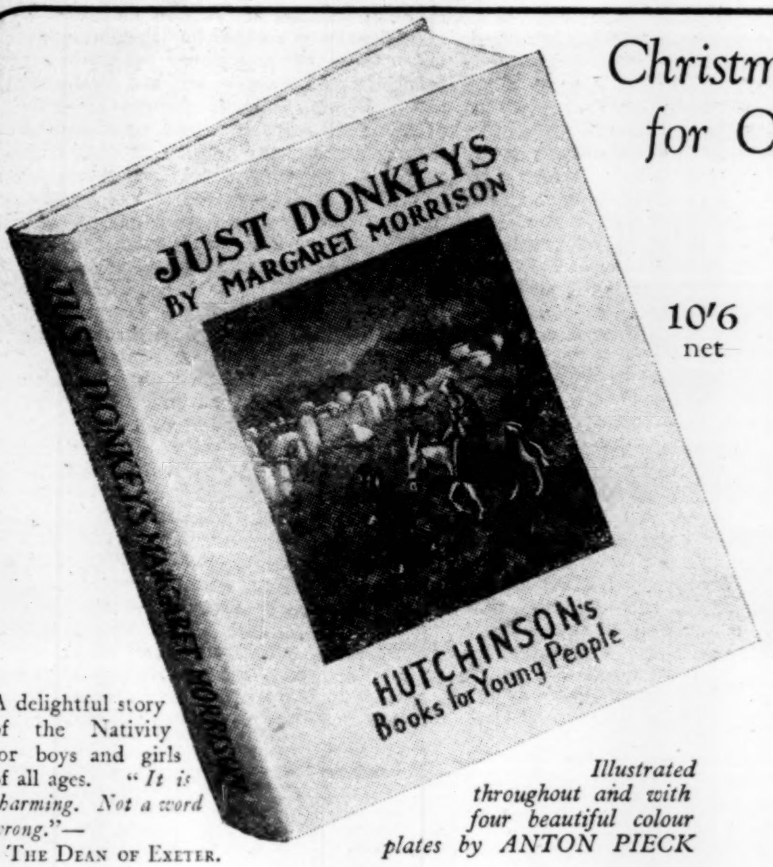

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acts of thinking expressed in propositions. Professor Ryle seems at times to suggest that all forms of knowing can be assimilated to the kind of knowing which is knowing how. Thus, when we talk there is no need to suppose that the ghost is formulating propositions which our words express. This is not to deny mental processes; it is to deny that there is a faculty of reason which initiates the processes, a faculty which in its turn entails a mind to own the faculty.

Professor Ryle's position thus involves two significant denials, the denial, first, that there is a separate entity or activity called a mind, and the denial, secondly, that there are mental processes which are assignable to separate faculties. Hume denied the mind, but gave some countenance to what is called the faculty psychology. Professor Ryle will have none of either. Yet, he insists, his position is not Behaviourism, for Behaviourism, in asserting that mental processes are analysable in terms of bodily behaviour, adds that bodily behaviour is itself determined. In other words, it conceives the body after the model of Newtonian science. "But," says Professor Ryle, "man need not be degraded to a machine by being denied to be a ghost in a machine." His view, then, if I do not mistake him, is that there are both mental processes and overt acts, but that neither the processes nor the acts are determined.

This is no place for a detailed criticism of this important book. One might cavil at the notion of the mental ghost as "a philosophers' myth." It has surely better authority than that, authority going back to "then shall the dust return to earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." Or one might draw attention to the fact that in the playing of a game there is precisely a moment, a recognisable moment, at which one's learnt skill, one's knowing *how*, gives way to the cognitive act which expresses itself in "a knowing that," the moment when, for instance, in crossing over at tennis one says to oneself: "I must think of something else. I wonder how a short cross-shot on his backhand will do. I will try and see."

But my main difficulty is that, in spite of all that Professor Ryle has done to clarify our concepts and to rectify the logical geography of our statements about mind, the problems raised by "the ghost" are not disposed of. The abolition of the ghost who owns or exercises a separate faculty of reasoning does not, Professor Ryle agrees, entail the abolition of reasoning processes, although the reasoning processes may be reduced to verbal announcements—"the thought . . . turns out to be just a soliloquised or muttered rehearsal of the overt statement itself." This certainly looks like Behaviourism, but it is not because of Professor Ryle's insistence on the occurrence of reasoning processes wherein, for him, lies the distinction between mindless chattering on the one hand, and talking and thinking on the other. But since the overt acts in the two cases may be the same, there is obviously something present in the second case which is absent in the first; this something, moreover, is unobservable. Two questions suggest themselves: first, how, then, does it escape the strictures brought against "the ghost," and, secondly, what is the nature of its connection with the overt act of talking? Unless these questions are satisfactorily answered—and I do not think that they are—the problem intractably remains.

C. E. M. JOAD

STENDHAL IN LONDON

Memoirs of an Egotist. By STENDHAL. Translated and with an Introduction by T. W. EARP. *Turnstile Press. 7s. 6d.*

Stendhal wrote this enchanting little book, which he left unfinished, in a fortnight. He wrote it at Rome in the summer of 1832, when he was aged 49 and had been consul at Civita Vecchia for a little over a year. In the list of his works it comes somewhere between *Le Rouge et le Noir* and the final period in which he wrote the *Chartreuse*, *Lucien Leuwen*, and his other unfinished autobiography, the *Vie de Henri Brulard*.

The Memoirs were intended to cover the period of Stendhal's life between 1821 and 1830 though they stop short long before. Like so many of his writings, they were done in a fit of compulsion, dashed off at a prescribed rate of twenty pages a sitting. Stendhal was always a fast writer; much of his later work was written in the dark. Yet, despite their scrappiness and random selection they make an impression of lifelike continuity. Mr. Earp, for whom this translation has been a labour of real love, has admirably caught that dry, incisive, at times rather stiff style, which, as one enthusiastic Beylist puts it, makes almost everything Stendhal wrote read like an angelic précis of the Book of Judgment.

The book opens early in 1821 with what Stendhal describes as "my last journey to Paris." He has only 3,500 francs, and is oppressed by thoughts of suicide, his love affair with Métilde Dembowski (née Viscontini) having ended. Although the shadow of his parting with her and his beloved Milan remained with him for the rest of his life, he recovered fairly quickly from the initial depression. He put up first at the Hotel de Bruxelles "because there lodged the driest and hardest of the Piedmontese, the Baron de Lussinge," who was to be his closest companion for the next ten years. It was Lussinge, who, finding Stendhal melancholy, arranged with his sensual friend Barot a little orgy to cheer him up.

Stendhal makes a characteristically frank admission of the fiasco which attended his attempt to make love to the *pièce de resistance* of the evening, the beautiful Alexandrine. Another entertaining passage in these opening chapters is his sketch of the Salon of Mme de Tracy where he meets Lafayette, aged 75, behaving like a gay old drawing-room satyr, lying in wait for young

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girls to pinch their behinds, becoming:

> frantic over a young Portuguese of eighteen; he imagines with (her) and with all other young women that she singles him out; he dreams only of her, and what is pleasant is that he is often right in his imaginings.

The turning point in Stendhal's recovery, and one of the most amusing episodes in the book, is provided by his visit to England. He "went to London to find a cure for the spleen and succeeded well enough." He set off with his English friend, Edward Edwards, had an absurd tiff at Calais, when "nearly drunk on English beer", with "a semi-lunatic English captain in the coasting trade," and put up at the Tavistock Hotel in Covent Garden. He kept himself to himself, preferring not to call on English notables he had met in Italy, such as Lady Jersey and Hobhouse, or to procure himself the entrée to Holland House. His impressions were mixed. Chelsea—"truly elegiac"—delighted him, and Richmond Park reminded him of his dear Lombardy. He was amused by *She Stoops to Conquer* and impressed by Kean's fire in *Othello.* But English snobbery revolted him:

> The first time I went to the ball at Almack's my banker, when he saw my ticket, said with a sigh: 'I have been working twenty-two years, sir, to go to that ball, and you'll be there in an hour.'
>
> Society (Stendhal continues) being divided as by the rings of a bamboo, everyone's chief preoccupation is to climb into the class above his own, and the whole effort of that class goes into stopping him from mounting.

His sociological flair (which, incidentally, has given Russian critics the pretext for claiming him as a Marxist forerunner) enabled him to discern at a glance the brutality that accompanied the Industrial Revolution.

> The excessive and crushing work of the English labourer revenges us for Waterloo and four coalitions. We, for our part, have buried our dead, and the survivors are much happier than the English.

His conclusion is typically French, anglophobe: "The English, it is my belief, are the most obtuse and barbarous people in the world."

The most vivid incident of the English visit happens to be an erotic one; it is especially worth marking because it displays Stendhal in an endearingly tender mood. His kindness to poor, stringy, chestnut-haired little Miss Appleby—one of three sisters, prostitutes in a house in Westminster Road ("a lost quarter, admirably suited for ruffians to beat up Frenchmen") is really touching.

The rest of the book includes some more recollections of Paris society, homage to his adored Mozart, a sketch of Maisonette, a remarkable civil servant of the period, and an attack on Scott as novelist ("I am horrified by the man himself and have several times refused to meet him"). Two of Stendhal's self-composed obituary notices—note his predilection for mathematics—round off a book of less than two hundred pages which contains more human material than many more compendious and better known confessions. Let us hope that its appearance in this admirable translation will help to recruit new English Beylists. MAURICE RICHARDSON

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Colonel Hamilton, a regular soldier posted to Aden in 1931 to command a Gilbertian troop of camelry, soon found himself thoroughly at home amidst these proud and temperamental people. There was none of the well-ordered routine of the District Commissioner's office in less independent territories. There were no police to call up to meet situations unpredictable by any political secretariat. And, best of all from Colonel Hamilton's point of view, you could so easily be beyond the reach of the bureaucrats in Aden. You could never tell what might happen. A knife flashing out from a threadbare kilt might be the unexpected sequel to a round of raucous singing. An elephantine practical joke might precipitate the wild firing of a hundred ancient rifles. Tortuous negotiations, prefaced by the innumerable ceremonial formulas of Islam, conducted with unparalleled guile and lack of scruple, might end in a burst of laughter at an ingenious compromise—or in an ominous silence that boded ill for the solitary British referee. For Hamilton—his name became a byword among the people of the Western Protectorate—it meant danger, everlasting watchfulness and a profound understanding of the people and their spoken language such as no traveller, observing but not sharing in this tribal life, could hope to acquire.

This is Colonel Hamilton's first book. But he has none of the self-consciousness of the novice. He writes with a natural gusto and with a depth of feeling, a nostalgic emotion, that belies his assertion that those who have known Arabia never wish to return. The emotion is a little too intense at times for a wholly fair perspective; the style too persistently florid. But both give much power to his descriptions of this wild arid country of desert, mountain and tumbled rocks, where a tiny patch of green cultivation brings miraculous relief to the eye.

Above all, the talk of these people, in their homes, in tribal assembly, in the gossiping groups that gather by the wellside in the evening, is most convincingly heard, with no trace of the stiffness and artificiality which so often makes this kind of record unbearable.

You cannot go far in south-west Arabia without coming across traces of the once rich towns and cemeteries of the ancient Arabian kingdoms. Colonel Hamilton provides some useful hints to the archaeologist in search of new discoveries. To-day the great ruins of Beihan, of Sheba's capital Shabwa, lie in the midst of a potential oil-field. It may not be long before the medieval "Kingdom of Melchior" disappears amidst the oil derricks and the railways of the new Arabia. A book like this which catches so admirably the spirit as well as the shape of Southern Arabia, before both change, is valuable as history as well as literature.

Mr. Ingrams is another noted Arabian, and his achievements and those of his wife as administrators and explorers are rightly praised by Colonel Hamilton. In *Seven Across the Sahara* Mr. Ingrams forsakes his old love, the Hadhramaut, and describes a journey with his family by car across the Sahara to take up a new post on

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A MUSICIAN ON ITALY

Made in Italy. By IGOR MARKEVITCH. *Harvill Press.* 10s. 6d.

It is often pleasant and sometimes instructive to watch the gifted amateur at work, and there is no reason why an eminent young Russian composer and conductor should not write solid sense on politics, economics, and other aspects of Italian life. Shortcomings there are, of course, and M. Markevitch who claims for his book no more than that it is "an artist's sketch," "one among the innumerable prefaces to the great living book of Italy," is modest enough. He does not write very well, although he has a sharp sense of anecdote; and he does not know how to construct a book so that a reader may find his way about in it; no doubt his musical work possesses all the expert craftsmanship in which this attempt in an alien medium is lacking. Yet one does not mind for one moment. The enthusiastic naiveté of this book is not only entirely disarming but quickly gains one's sympathy. M. Markevitch persuades and convinces. This is rare enough with the work of amateurs. The vivid personal experience and the alert sense of urgency which radiate from it, compensate fully for the rambling discursiveness of this very musical tract.

M. Markevitch found himself trapped in Italy in 1940, with "that dreadful Nansen passport with which I have been afflicted since childhood," and lived, worked, and struggled there throughout the war, the liberation, and the subsequent period of transition. He shrewdly observes that allied officers, by the time they had fought and administered their way up from Sicily to Florence, were thoroughly Italianised in their approach and outlook, and this process of assimilation he himself has undergone with even greater thoroughness. He does understand the Italians, in and out of Fascism, and his sensitive analysis of their character is full of sparkling lights. "It is no paradox to say," he remarks, "that Fascism remained in power largely because of the Italian's respect for the liberty of other people. When forced to do something against his will, the Italian has a way of simply fading out. In this sense Fascism governed millions of absentees."

Just because observations like these are fundamentally true, M. Markevitch is, of course, naively wrong in thinking that he "offers neither thesis nor apologia." His plea that "we no longer know anything about each other and must start being introduced all over again," sincere and true as it is, makes his book one fervent apologia for the conduct of the Italians during twenty years of Fascism, because no passionate and emphatic interpretation of the Italian character can help ending up as an apologia. And he certainly has a thesis, and it is a solid one.

M. Markevitch is the son of a Ukrainian landowner, and like so many of the younger generation of Russian émigrés, not altogether out of sympathy with the Soviet regime. He believes as fervently that the future of Italy lies with its peasants—"what faith in mankind these poor people had!"—as he roundly denounces its aristocracy and landowning nobility as the greatest blight from which the country is suffering. "My impression of the Italian ruling classes," he observes, "is that they are wholly unprepared to deal with present-day problems. One is almost tempted to excuse them by saying: they do not even know that they know nothing." Few qualified observers will quarrel with this musician's impression.

After sharing for years the wretched and perilous existence of Tuscan peasants and resistance fighters, the author is convinced that true regeneration for Italy can come only from the land, and this means the renunciation of centralist ideas and a return to the full flowering of Italian regionalism as expressed in a flexible republican structure. M. Markevitch reminds one of the significant advances made in this direction during the fight for liberation, and deplores the subsequent loss of many of the gains secured by the National Liberation Committee. In this he is not alone. He points rightly to the re-introduction of the stultifying Fascist prefectural system as a major setback, and argues convincingly that a thorough land reform and a reshaping of the system of local government are the first prerequisites if "Italy is to become herself again once more. Present-day Italy is only the possibility of what she might become." This, in itself, however, is already an advance. For under Mussolini, as M. Markevitch shows, she was reduced to being her own impossibility.

The publishers do not state in what language this instructive book was originally written, but whichever it was, Mrs. Silone, that versatile linguist, has put it into graceful English.

PETER DE MENDELSSOHN

YEATS'S GAZEBO

Yeats: The Man and the Masks. By RICHARD ELLMANN. *Macmillan.* 21s.

Mr. Ellmann's book is an admirable attempt, in a world that is still unutterably stupid about the nature of the relation of symbol to spiritual reality, and of the imaginative hierarchies that are the theme of all great poets and all great religions, to understand Yeats's debt to occultism. This is not the sole theme of the book, and Mr. Ellmann does full justice to Yeats's political activities, but certainly the most new and the most interesting sections are on Yeats's esoteric affiliations. Official Christianity has, in the course of two thousand years of progressive rationalisation, rendered practically useless, for all imaginative purposes, one of the greatest myths ever conceived; and between the two forms of crass materialism—the Catholic superstition that insists on imaginative truths as material facts, and the Protestant that pares down myth to credible historical narrative, one does not know which the more bitterly to deplore. It is a saving grace of this century that the whole question of myth, symbol and the spiritual hierarchies has been reopened. For the imaginative, Frazer and his successors have revealed the world of meaning that underlies all myths. The psychologists have shown us the use of natural symbols, and brought back the old figures of the gods as the eternal attributes of the imagination. The cruder orthodox conceptions both of religion and of atheism have been rendered meaningless by the greater subtlety of the questions that we are slowly learning to ask—for the profundity of the answer must always depend upon the profundity of the question.

A few years ago it was still fashionable to dismiss Yeats's preoccupation with theosophy and magic as bogus and silly. It is no longer possible, as we learn more, to adopt this attitude, and Mr. Ellmann is the first Yeats critic to have given due weight to Yeats's occultism. There is no getting away from the fact that the study of esotericism was the major preoccupation of Yeats's life. As students in Dublin, Yeats and George Russell had already, as he tells us in his *Autobiographies*, become interested in magic. With Edwin Ellis, Yeats was one of the first students to attempt an interpretation of Blake's Prophetic Books, a study which he carried out in the light of what he had learned at the Theosophical Society, and the Hermetic and Kabbalistic Lodge of the Golden Dawn, of which he was a full initiate. As such he was vowed to dedicate his life to the Great Work; his name in the Lodge was a revealing one: *Demon est Deus*

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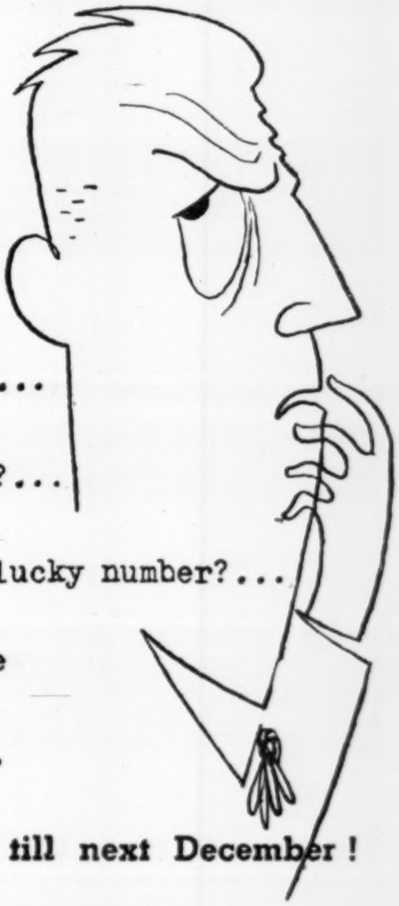

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Inversus. Later in life spiritualism attracted him, and he was fortunate enough to marry a wife with remarkable mediumistic powers, with whose help he produced his own system of esoteric Yeatsism, as described in *A Vision.* It is perhaps not sufficiently realised how hieratic and ritualistic was Yeats's approach to symbolism. Those unfamiliar with the elaborate traditional systems which he used might mistake much in his poetry for romantic, natural symbolism, arising from the unconscious. It is a proof of the completeness of Yeats's assimilation of his symbolic system that it should be possible to understand his symbols without knowledge of their sources. But Yeats, in his esotericism, was a formalist and a ritualist. It is not in his having formal and fixed symbols that the esotericist differs from the orthodox, but in his attitude towards those symbols. Yeats was as great a ritualist as any Roman Catholic, but his credulity turned on a needle-point.

Mr. Ellmann describes Yeats, as a young man, as torn between paternal scepticism and maternal belief, and given to evasion and to begging questions instead of answering them. In the light of Yeats's later development, one wonders whether that is the right way to describe his attitude, even in his immaturity. To the plain man Yeats's mind must seem tortuous from first to last. As a youth he had grave doubts about Madame Blavatsky's Mahatmas, and yet it was not for scepticism, but for his over-zealous insistence that magical " phenomena " should be produced, that he was finally asked to leave the Theosophical Society. Much later in life, when asked whether he " believed " in the elaborate symbolic system of *A Vision,* he replied that " if sometimes, overwhelmed by miracle as all men must be when in the midst of it, I have taken such periods literally, my reason has soon recovered ; and now that system stands out clearly in my imagination I regard it as a stylistic arrangement of experience." And again, " Some will ask if I believe all that this book contains, and I will not know how to answer. Does the word belief, used as they will use it, belong to this age, can I think of the world as there and I here judging it ? " One recalls the lines in a very early poem :

> The very world itself may be
> Only a sudden flaming word
> Mid clanging space a moment heard.

" We the great gazebo built " ; but in that world of zodiac and sphere, cone and gyre, what is symbol and what reality ? Mr. Ellmann writes with great perception that

> the interpenetrating gyres are symbolic of sexual love, but it would be equally true to say that sexual love is symbolic of the gyres ; symbols reflect one another like mirrors so that a great range of connotation is called into play, and there is no way of separating the two parts of the metaphor, " the dancer from the dance."

This is the fruit of years of familiarity with Kabbalistic thought, with its complex structure of planes of reality, reflected down from one to another, from the unknowable spiritual source to the world of matter—the lowest form of spirit. One is perpetually reminded, too, of Herakleitus's saying of mortals and immortals that they " live the other's death and die the other's life," and of his sleeper who " lights up from the dead."

Not since Wordsworth—or perhaps since Milton—has a poet of comparable inspiration been raised, also, to such a vantage point of greatness in the history of his country. Mr. Ellmann suggests that Yeats the Irish Nationalist was a fulfilment rather of Maud Gonne's ideals than of his own. But it is important to remember that the occultist and dreamer had his counterpart in the active organiser and eloquent speaker, who with the thrice repeated name " Parnell " could make a crowd hang upon his words. The ideals that he sought to give to the Irish Nationalist movement may have been a little hazy, like those of the national mystical sect of the Castle of Heroes that he founded. But the Abbey Theatre survived as a concrete realisation of some of these ideals ; and it is surely fitting that Yeats should have been one of the first Senators of the Republic of Eire—even though, a few years later, he was to write to Ezra Pound " Do not be elected to the senate of your country. I think myself, after six years, well out of mine." Mr. Ellmann, it may be added, does full justice to the influence of Ezra Pound in the transformation of the older poet's style from the mistiness of his Celtic Twilight to the bare splendour of his later poetry.

KATHLEEN RAINE

SUBJECTIVE ECONOMICS

Human Action. By LUDWIG VON MISES. *Hodge.* 42*s.*

Professor von Mises may well arouse the admiration of less pertinacious economists by his publication in 1949 of precisely the same criticism of socialist planning which he first expressed in 1920. This new and glossy book, *Human Action,* is based on an article which he wrote on *Economic Calculation in the Socialist Commonwealth* when he was teaching in Vienna after the first world war. The comparison of the two comes as something of a shock if one happens to believe in the objective validity of economics as a science. The arguments which were expressed with ice-cold logic in the essay on economic calculation are now set out in *Human Action* as bombastic propaganda. Although Professor von Mises asserts in his new book that the economist is free in his thinking from any dependence on his own emotions, or on his social background, there is small evidence of academic detachment in his reasoning. Indeed, his insistence that the economist's attitude is bound to be scientific is a singular comment to find amongst these pages of rhetoric. This use of economic theory to express personal prejudice can only bring discredit on a science which does in fact achieve a truly " scientific " standard of objective consistency when it is practised by less passionate economists than Professor von Mises.

It may be that Professor von Mises is writing more loudly and insistently because he has nothing new to say. Thirty years ago he made an important contribution to the discussion of planning when he argued that without the guidance of the free market, which he assumed would be abolished under socialism, there would be no way for the planners to know how much to produce and in what order to produce it. Market prices indicate the relative urgency of society's wants, and planning without prices would be like flying an aeroplane through fog without an instrument panel. With no experience of planning to guide them, economists discussed this problem until the second world war showed that planning was possible and practicable whatever Professor von Mises might say to the contrary. The experience of war did not, of course, provide a solution to all the problems of planning. As Professor Lionel Robbins has pointed out, it is a good deal more simple to plan for the one aim of victory in war than for the multiple aims of peace. It is a ticklish business to decide whether housing, health or the export trades shall have the earlier claim on the nation's resources. But the market does not necessarily decide the relative priority of these things in a more rational way than intelligent planning. The building of expensive, *chichi* restaurants in free enterprise Germany before the rubble had been cleared away suggests that the market may not always be right. But what has shunted Professor von Mises off the main track of current thought on planning is that the market has continued to exist under socialism.

He refuses to discuss the problems of the mixed economy on their own merits, largely because the form which socialism has in fact taken does not suit the assumptions which he made thirty years ago. According to his singular and private view of world history, the events of the last thirty years have made no difference to the premises on which the problems of socialist planning should be discussed. After brushing aside the wartime advances in planning technique as a mistake—because, he says, " the profit system produces the best weapons "—he goes on to dismiss British socialism as only another example of the " socialism " practised by President von Hindenburg in the Weimar Republic. One has to be pretty well locked in one's personal retrospections to be able to equate Mr. Attlee with the old Junker from East Prussia.

Professor von Mises does, indeed, show many indications that he is prepared to trust his own *a priori* reasonings rather than the facts of history. Nowhere in *Human Action* is this more apparent than in the theory of society and of human behaviour which is ostensibly the theme of the book. It is hardly necessary to comment on his extraordinary belief that society grew up originally around the focus of the market—" the exchange relationship," he says, " is the fundamental social relationship," and that the " feelings of sympathy and friendship " which we have for our fellow men are unimportant as social forces. Since Professor von Mises believes that in the beginning was the Stock Exchange, it is not surprising that he regards the price system as being ordained by the natural order of the universe. To do him justice, he is sufficiently modest to stop just short of the cosmic in his proof that the free market is a fitting expression of the fundamental pattern of natural forces. He is content to show in some chapters of rather dubious metaphysics that the market is right because it is in accordance with the Rules of Thought.

Professor von Mises has a way of tripping himself up, and one may turn against his arguments his own statement in another part of the book, that " The State creates and preserves the environment in which the market can safely operate." This is a possibly unwitting admission that the market is rather the artificial product of a highly sophisticated society than the earliest expression of primitive social behaviour. And while we are quoting Professor von Mises against himself, we may add, as a final judgment on this

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PETER SOVREN

MAN-MADE CUMBERLAND

Cumberland and Westmorland. By NORMAN NICHOLSON. *Hale.* 15*s.*

At first sight this appears to be just one more book about the Lakes. It includes the parts of Lancashire which belong to the Lake system and virtually excludes Bewcastle Waste which belongs to the Border, and Alston and Crossfell which belong to the Pennines—a grouping which emphasises the folly of the proposed administration of the National Park by three separate County Councils. But in both its omissions and additions it stands out as something refreshingly different from all the other Lake District books.

Many of the usual ingredients are there—geology, green things, creatures great and small, history, archaeology and anecdote. Although there is no place in the framework of chapter and sub-headings for topographical description, plenty of discursive writing of the "Highways and Byways" sort is squeezed in. The Eskdale miniature railway, for instance, appears as an "Igneous intrusion in the Older Rocks." It is all seen with a perceptive eye and related in a stimulating way.

But for Mr. Nicholson this is not so much a book about the Lakes as about West Cumberland, the little known strip of collieries and mines which lie between the mountains and the sea. All the time he is in the fells and dales one is conscious that just round the corner are the towns and villages which in the slump years knew total unemployment, when only the unproductive 20 per cent.—policemen, shopkeepers and school teachers—had anything to do. Indeed, in his last two very moving chapters Mr. Nicholson withdraws entirely from the Lakes, as the tourist sees them, to move amongst his fellow West Cumbrians, whose suffering and hopes he has shared all his life.

It is not surprising then that he should see problems of Lake District "preservation," such as the controversy over the proposed damming of Ennerdale Water to provide water for a rayon factory at Sellafield, and the subsequent scheme for an atomic plant, in rather a different light from the man who occasionally spends a short holiday at the Anglers' Inn. I had hoped the book would include some vigorous discussion of the whole debatable question of natural beauty versus local interests. But, although there are some suggestive comments, Mr. Nicholson does not grasp this particular nettle. It seems a little dishonest in as honest and balanced a book as this practically to ignore so real a problem, and to avoid mentioning the National Park or even the National Trust.

At one point Mr. Nicholson refers to "God who makes the country"; but the whole book emphasises the part played by man in clothing and colouring the landscape of this most humanised of all mountain districts. In his defence of telegraph poles, pylons, railways, quarries, reservoirs and the Commissioners' conifers, and in his suspicion of lovers of "unspoilt" scenery, he shows more confidence than most of us in man as a country-maker. It is this appreciation of the scenery of the district from the human angle which probably accounts for his most striking omission. The tops of the high fells and the great crags play no part in the book; and although the dalesman's sports, foxhunting, wrestling and hound-trailing are sympathetically discussed, there is nothing about the visitors' recreations of fell-walking and rock-climbing. It is a book which every Lake District holiday-maker should read to restore his sense of proportion, but perhaps yet another book about it all should be written for the West Cumbrians.

In two matters the author has been ill-served by his publisher. The map, a very necessary adjunct to the book, is an illegible mass of scratchy lines which obscure the ill-formed and already illegible letters of the place-names. Really, a series like these *County Books* should have decent maps. The plates—an excellent series of photographs (which like the text neglect the tops and richly illustrate the human side of the landscape)—are "bled off" in the marginless manner which was all the rage about fifteen years ago. You cannot look at them without getting your thumb in the view, and if ever the book is rebound, and library copies may need that quite soon, the tops of some of the hills and many of the trees will disappear. Where the plates face each other they become hopelessly confused, as the two views merge. And to make matters worse, when you have played the game of Hunt the Caption and finally run it to earth, you will find the titles in pairs without so much as a stop to separate them. For instance in an effort to disentangle some rocks on the Brathay from a larger river you will find a title which reads "Coniston Water, from the North River Esk."

PETER BICKNELL

THE VILLAGER AT HOME

The English Rural Labourer. By G. E. FUSSELL. *Batchworth Press.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

It was a good notion of Mr. Fussell's to gather together from many sources an account of the village labourer's conditions of home life through the centuries, from the beginning of the modern period to our own day. But it was not an easy project to carry through; for though there is a good deal of information there are serious gaps in it, and the picture is blurred at many points. We can find many surviving examples of old cottages; but how far are they typical? Certainly not of the worst. We can find old furniture; but hardly such as was found in the labourer's cottage save by exception, for the written evidence goes to show that through most of the period Mr. Fussell covers a majority of the labourers had hardly any possessions that deserve to be called furniture. We can get an idea of what sort of things the labourers ate at different periods, and of considerable variations in diet; but it is very difficult indeed to discover *how much* the labourer and his family usually got to eat, at any rate till the latter part of the eighteenth century, when the systematic collection of data began with the work of David Davies, F. M. Eden, and Arthur Young, and the pamphleteers started bandying words about the proper treatment of paupers in view of rising food prices during the French Wars. Information about clothing is even scantier, especially in respect of quantity possessed; and Mr. Fussell is driven to eke out the scanty records with data relating to farmers and craftsmen rather than ordinary labourers.

Nevertheless, a clear enough picture emerges to justify Mr. Fussell's attempt. We get no pleasant impression of the "good old times" before the Industrial Revolution, or, at any period, of anything except grinding poverty and great precariousness of supplies in face of recurrent scarcity. Even if the eighteenth-century landlords built many improved cottages with adequate bedroom space, according to the ideas of the time, a large part of the rural population continued to inhabit old, insanitary one- or two-room cottages, or to share a cottage barely adequate for a single family. The use of wheaten bread increased in the eighteenth century; but especially in bad times coarse cereals were still widely used, and pulse was often ground up in the flour to eke out deficiencies. The potato was coming in fast, but it did not become general till the nineteenth century, and was a mixed blessing when its cheapness was used as a reason for cutting down poor relief under the Speenhamland system up to 1834.

Mr. Fussell's data confirm the impression that conditions, after improving at any rate for a substantial section of the rural population up to the middle of the eighteenth century, definitely worsened towards its end and well into the nineteenth century. The disappearance of small beer under the influence of the Malt Tax was one factor in the deterioration, though not of course the most important. Another was the disappearance of local textile industries, as a source of income as well as of clothing materials. Bought clothing of poor quality replaced the very long-lasting home-mades of an earlier period: the labourer had rather more clothes, but largely worse ones, so that the balance is hard to strike. Indeed, the main impression left by Mr. Fussell's well-illustrated book, which is an excellent quarry in which to dig for information on particular points, is that we know very little about how the village poor did live, and need to be very cautious in generalising about the changes in their condition over the centuries, at any rate up to the eighteenth century.

G. D. H. COLE

THE HISTORICAL NOVEL

The World is Not Enough. By ZOE OLDENBOURG. *Gollancz.* 15*s.*
Arras of Youth. By OLIVER ONIONS. *Michael Joseph.* 10*s.* 6*d.*
Sing, Morning Star. By JANE OLIVER. *Collins.* 10*s.* 6*d.*
Crown Imperial. By J. DELVES BROUGHTON *Faber.* 12*s.* 6*d.*
Attila. By LOUIS DE WOHL. *Gollancz.* 10*s.* 6*d.*
Christopher Columbus. By MARIO GHISALBERTI. *Heinemann.* 15*s.*

The technical distinction between a period novel and a historical novel is, I suppose, that in a period novel the principal characters do not figure in recorded history. In practice, a period novel is generally placed in the eighteenth century or after, so that we tend to think of, for instance, *Notre Dame de Paris* as a historical novel. But a good many period novelists can now manage the middle ages too, so that tapestry has begun to take its place side by side with the Regency bucks and Victorian whorehouses. The advantage of the eighteenth century and after is that novels were then written and may be imitated. Medieval scholarship has so far advanced in the last half-century that an equally detailed documentation is now frequently possible for the tapestry period, but satisfactory verbal pastiche becomes more difficult in a tapestry piece. A novel whose dialogue alone was in Middle English or Old French would find few readers in a market where the dash of culture required is no more than a colouring and flavouring matter of which two or three drops are shaken round the glass and thrown out.

Yet, on the whole, it is easier to justify the period novel than the historical novel, both from the novelist's and from the historian's point of view. The author is required at least to devise his characters and plot. In the distinction made by Ramon Fernandez (it is sometimes unjustly attributed to Gide), the period novel may remain a true novel, in that a sort of creative proliferation may take place in the author's consciousness and the characters seem to acquire volition, whereas the historical novel can only be a *récit*, a retrospective account of things which have already happened. One may imagine the novelist one admires writing a period novel. Despite the example of Robert Graves (and one removes this awkward exception by saying that Mr. Graves is primarily a poet and not at all a "true" novelist), one cannot, without the greatest difficulty, imagine the historical novel proper in the hands of any writer not faintly second-rate. In passing, it may be said that the costume play, a designation which covers the stage equivalents of both period and historical novels, is in slightly better case and that this difference has to do with the comparative impersonality of play-writing.

Historical figures who have appeared in works of fiction this year are Queen Elizabeth, Columbus, Richard Coeur de Lion, Malcolm Canmore and Attila the Hun. Richard appears only transitorily in *The World is Not Enough*, and, so to say, as a spectacle in what is otherwise, for all its castrations, nose-slitting and American translator, a rather good period novel of the medieval French seigniory. Oliver Onions's latest is a not wholly dissimilar tapestry piece, carefully and often beautifully figured, stylistically flawed by the tricks ("the sky was a rolling of blue and white") with which the Georgians indicated ache and yearning or what those great theorists the Welsh call "*hiraeth*," by an understandable but sometimes trying fondness for ancient trade-names, and by the author's palpable uncertainty as to how much regional idiom he ought to allow the speech of his fifteenth-century Yorkshire rogues and clerics.

Of four historical novels proper, none is without seriousness or literary merit. Jane Oliver, in *Sing, Morning Star*, and J. Delves Broughton, in *Crown Imperial*, have gone so far as to print bibliographies and prefaces. For the purposes of his *Attila*, Louis de Wohl has clearly read all that is to be read about his troubled period, and Mario Ghisalberti's *Christopher Columbus* lacks nothing in the way of upholstery. All four themes are fascinating. Had Malcolm Canmore struck earlier, Edinburgh might indeed have been the capital of these islands. In our own time, we feel again something of Rome's terror before the eastern hordes. Among French Catholic writers alone, Columbus fired the imaginations of both Claudel and Léon Bloy. Even the "inner life" (as the blurb calls it) of Queen Elizabeth seems not beyond elucidation. Yet in none of these four books does a page go by without offering some outrage to one's sense of the past, less by demonstrable lapses of taste or insufficiencies of knowledge than by intrusions of the homely and the unspecific, which the form itself seems to impose.

Certainly, the authors must individually take some blame. In *Crown Imperial*, several of the love-passages between Elizabeth and the Earl of Leicester are more embarrassing than they need have been:

> Throwing himself down on his knees, he caught hold of the cold hands.
>
> "Elizabeth—you cannot use me so! I am desperate—wild for you—am I nothing to you?"
>
> "I love you," she said. She repeated it twice on a strange note which seemed to have the cadence of a funeral knell. "I love you. I love you!"

Mr. de Wohl's imaginary conversations between popes and generals might have been rendered less in the language of the popular broadcaster.

> "But Fabius believed in Rome," said Leo. "And you do not. Is that it, Aetius?"
>
> "Belief," said Aetius—

Bitterly, may we suppose?

> —"it's such a beautiful word."

Signor Ghisalberti might have contrived to keep his documentation separate from his displays of psychological insight.

> Don Henrique de Guzman, Duke of Medina Sidonia, was too good a courtier to dare openly to contradict the opinions of the beautiful Beatriz Fernandez de Bobadilla, Marquesa de Moya.

And the mother of St. Margaret (a Hungarian), in her manner of speech, perhaps reminds us too persistently of refugees we have met. All the same, the trouble is that the historical novelist has to peep through imaginary keyholes at all, that what is expected of a novel compels him to make his characters gesticulate and speak, generally in a language not even remotely theirs, and that much has to be attributed in the way of thought and motive for which no psychology of the time provides.

Yet surely all that concerns us in the past is that which was specific to it. Or are we really convinced that history repeats itself in detail as well as in gross and that human nature is always the same? Of these four novels, I am most attracted by Miss Oliver's. I happen to be currently up in the period, and I cannot catch her out in any major inaccuracy, though I doubt whether Malcolm had met Margaret before the exile-ship was blown into St. Margaret's Bay, or whether Malcolm was on such terms as Miss Oliver supposes with Tostig, whom, after all, Simeon of Durham describes as his *frater conjuratus*; and I doubt, too, whether in 1068

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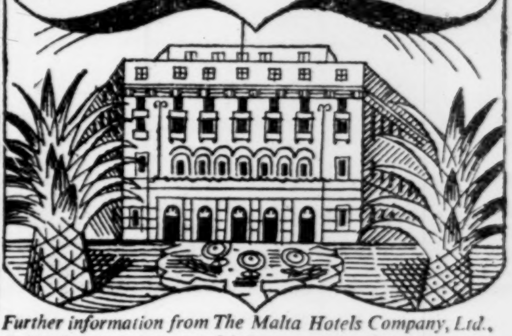

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rosaries were to be found in this country. Yet I must also confess that in the first place I was drawn to *Sing, Morning Star* by horrid fear. I saw it advertised as the "love-story" of Malcolm Canmore and the Saxon Saint, and I wondered, for instance, what Miss Oliver was going to do with that "big head" which gave Malcolm his (perhaps by association with "claymore") to us romantic-sounding name. Would she conceal it, or would it assume the emotional weight of Cyrano de Bergerac's nose? Would Margaret take it upon her bosom and sigh? The answer is of course that Miss Oliver has steered a tasteful middle course, that she has allowed these rough men to have yellow teeth and dirty clothes and that the whole theme is nevertheless blunted, modernised and wrapped in gentility. This ruffian, this unilateral denouncer of treaties, murderer of the good Macbeth and the young Lulach, protection racketeer and slaver, has become a great woolly teddy-bear of a man who needs only pipe, tweeds and dog to make him every woman's ideal bachelor. But it is not altogether Miss Oliver's fault. The known history of Malcolm Canmore and Queen Margaret could be told in twenty pages. The publisher of a historical novel must have three hundred.

To fill those two hundred and eighty pages with anything but modern psychology and day-dreams would require a great historian, a great eccentric, a poet or an inspired chatterbox. Mr. Graves knows two ways of doing it. There is the Claudius way, which consists in choosing your central figure for his passive, watchful temperament and letting him be the eyes before which an age unfolds. And there is the Jesus way, an alternation of poetry and outrageous contention. Committed to Malcolm Canmore, Mr. Graves would have taken the matrilineal succession of the Picts, together with some unexplained passages from Irish lyric and the Orkney saga, and presented the war against Macbeth (whose claim to the throne was through his wife) as the last dastardly blow by which Christianity drove the White Goddess underground, to reappear, as far as these islands are concerned, much debased, only in the witch cult. Is there still a formula according to which untendentious historical novels about men of action could be made pleasing to an informed taste, or is the form quite beyond redemption? The laudable ambition of the historical novelist is no doubt to make the past "live." But there is no good or lively writing which is not radically selective. In the historical novel the need for selection is replaced by a need for addition. At present, we seem likely to get a more "living" past from the happy pedant with his five words of Pictish, his tentative morphology of the Celtic tongues and his two or three vitrified forts. The gaping holes in his knowledge will at least serve as windows, and the little that he tells us we may find both credible and suggestive. RAYNER HEPPENSTALL

PICTURE BOOKS

Jan Vermeer. By F. W. S. VAN THIENEN. *Longmans.* 10s. 6d.

Seurat. Introduction and Notes by R. H. WILENSKI. *Faber.* 8s. 6d.

Gainsborough. By OLIVER MILLAR. *Longmans.* 10s. 6d.

Turner. Introduction and Notes by JOHN ROTHENSTEIN. *Faber.* 8s. 6d.

Painters and Writers. By CARLOS PEACOCK. *Phoenix House.* 25s.

The Story of Art. By E. H. GOMBRICH. *Phaidon Press.* 21s.

Fra Angelico. By GERMAIN BAZIN. *Heinemann.* 36s.

The first five books on this list are items in the gift department of the art publishing trade. The first four are albums of colour plates illustrating the works of established masters. We may consider such publications, in their present profusion, to be quite as welcome and acceptable to the lover of painting as the bridge-marker to the bridge player. They may serve as keepsakes, reviving our memories of visits to foreign galleries, or they may be tokens of the future delights of our next trip to the Continent. Even when the illustrations are largely drawn from the wealth of our own national collections, we may appreciate the convenience of a record of our favourite paintings in a handy and, usually, an elegant format. We may also, without incurring the reproach of vandalism, cut out the plates and pin them on the walls of our bed-sitting-room. The value of these books as suitable gifts is acknowledged and we may be grateful for their availability at reasonable prices.

It should not be supposed, however, that they are adapted as the vehicles of criticism or scholarship. The accompanying texts are too short and the reproductions themselves too few to afford the general reader, for whom these books must be intended, more than a potted notion of the total achievement of the painter concerned. Mr. John Rothenstein, in his introduction to the volume on Turner issued by Messrs. Faber, is mainly concerned, as he says, "to give the briefest indication of Turner's development as a painter and of the nature of his contribution to the art of Europe, and of his character as a man." Mr. R. H. Wilenski writing on Seurat is constrained, apparently by space, to refer the reader to his account of Seurat's life published elsewhere, limiting himself in the present instance to "a few of the facts." Mr. Oliver Millar and Professor Van Thienen, the respective authors of Messrs. Longmans' volumes on Gainsborough and Vermeer, introduce their subjects at greater length and it may be said that, in the case of the Dutch master, the rarity of authentic works and the inadequacy of the biographical data permit a colourable brevity of a treatment. The authors of all four introductions provide information that is useful and reliable as far as it goes. There can, however, be no argument on the desirability, in publications of this kind, of an exacting standard of reproduction, and it is particularly regrettable that Mr. Rothenstein's vigorous and well-judged assertion of Turner's still disputed greatness should have been illustrated with plates of which several are perversions of the originals.

Carlos Peacock's *Painters and Writers* is an "anthology" of ninety-six admirably reproduced paintings accompanied by appropriate quotations from literature. Many of his juxtapositions are illuminating and delightful: passages from Turgenev are made to comment upon Chagall, Gissing on Cézanne, Joyce on Klee and—with surprising sympathy—Miss Mitford on Modigliani. Unfortunately, the author's ingenuity was artificially taxed by the conditions of his task, which was commissioned by the Trustees of the Tate Gallery and necessarily restricted his choice to examples from the Millbank collections. We may hope that it was this limitation which induced such an infelicitous "parallel" as Stubbs's romantic but palpable tiger with Blake's impalpable conjuration of the same symbol, although, as in some of the other comparisons, this parallel is not less diverting for the tactlessness it may be thought to exhibit.

Both E. H. Gombrich's *The Story of Art* and Germain Bazin's *Fra Angelico* are too comprehensive and too diligently composed to be considered as specifically suitable to the somewhat compromising requirements of a gift department. The four hundred and sixty pages of *The Story of Art* start with an account of the cave of Lascaux, and the author contrives to pursue his narrative, with pardonable simplifications and without bemusing the literate reader, to a concluding discussion of surrealism. His book is intended for the uninitiated, but he manages to show that the pleasures of the "initiates" are not so hermetic as the Philistines may believe. Though the young are the most likely to profit from his summary, the elderly and the educated may consult it without irritation or humility. Industry and scholarship are evidently the foundations of Germain Bazin's study of Fra Angelico which, in the English edition, is chiefly valuable for its copious and beautiful photographs. The book is worth possessing for their sake, and it is possible that those who are determined to plumb the virtues of the text in the English version will reap the benefit of the apparent thoroughness of the original. The translation abuses both the grammar and the syntax of our language and any appraisal of the critical perceptions of an author so ill-served in translation might well be an incautious undertaking. As an example of the more excusable defects of the translator's manner, we might quote from his description of the Madonna of St. Mark, of which he writes:

> "She might be a little posterior to the one of Cortona, for she attests a progress in the expression of volume . . ."

ROBIN IRONSIDE

NEW LOOKS AND OLD FACES

The Best of Ernest Thompson Seton. Selected by W. KAY ROBINSON. *Hodder & Stoughton.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The Swiss Family Robinson. By J. D. WYSS. *Oxford.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Blue and Green Fairy Books. By ANDREW LANG. *Longmans.* 10*s.* 6*d.* each.

Treasure Island. By R. L. STEVENSON. *Eyre & Spottiswoode.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Huckleberry Finn. By MARK TWAIN. *Paul Elek.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The Essential Uncle Remus. By J. C. HARRIS. *Cape.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. Lear's Nonsense Songs. Nursery Rhymes. *Zodiac Books.* 2*s.* each.

It is impossible to be fair about reprints of books one enjoyed as a child. In memory, the pleasures of the book, and the pleasures associated with its reading, are too closely intertwined. The *Just So* illustrations have, for me, something of the sweetness of sugar lumps dipped in real cream; the drawings of Ernest Thompson Seton's *Two Little Savages* smell aromatically of the *pinus noblus* up which it was read. When we press the books we loved on our children we are really trying to pass on, too, the other experiences—the melting sweetness of the cream-sodden lumps, the hours of absorbed freedom high up the giant tree. So any change in the form of favourite books becomes, not a question of taste, but of tampering with a private magic; and it evokes something a good deal more primitive than reasoned criticism or praise.

It is easy to be judicious about *The Best of Ernest Thompson Seton* for it has the original illustrations by the author—though perversely I found myself wondering whether the full-page drawings, with their grey and white washes enclosed in stiff black margins might not look too fusty and old-fashioned to a child today. It is easy too to appraise a new *Swiss Family Robinson*, which never claimed any share of my affection, and whose latest illustrator, C. Walter Hodges, does quite a lot, in his Rackham-reminiscent drawings, to brighten up that unromantic island. But it is a different story with the re-dressed Andrew Lang Fairy Books. It is excellent that they are being reissued—the Red and Yellow, one gathers, are soon to follow the Blue and Green—and the adult is better able to appreciate Lang's achievement. Any child brought up on his fairy books was at home in the worlds of Perrault, Grimm and Andersen, and had at least a nodding acquaintance with the folk-lores of Europe and Asia; he could see the world in terms of myth and archetype. The original illustrator, H. J. Ford (and his occasional collaborator, Lancelot Speed), at least did not narrow this scope. Ford's rather pre-Raphaelite drawings did invite the imagination to wander. There was usually a white horse grazing in the background, or a tropical bird flitting through receding aisles of trees, or a tiny ship in the distance seen through a window, to draw the reader right into the magic world. Remembering the pleasant fancies these pictures aroused, I opened the new Blue and Green Books. First impressions were excellent: the type is larger and clearer, the page less crowded. But the pictures remain on a dead level of ghastly middling good taste. They are flat and mostly one-dimensional, leaving no room for the fancy to play: no intriguing darkness, no mystery, everything seems to happen in the broadest daylight. Ben Kutcher's drawings (to the *Blue Fairy Book*) lean towards a comic strip vulgarity; Dorothy Lake Gregory's (to the *Green*) to a chocolate-box prettiness of the artier kind. Many of the fairy stories are grim, and their characters loathsome; Ford really helped us to believe in giants, trolls and talking heads. But these new illustrators, with their nursery-school healthiness, cannot begin to render evil. The Medusa head illustrating the Perseus legend wouldn't frighten a mouse; and the monstrous beast it petrifies is obviously a cute wooden toy.

Happily, there is no excessive healthiness about Mervyn Peake's pictures to *Treasure Island*—about which, having originally read that work in an unillustrated edition, I have no feelings to be outraged. The black and grey hatching of the backgrounds opens up mysterious vistas—tunnels of evil, caves of horrors. The bad is very bad: Pew grasps Jim Hawkins with grotesque enormous hands, his squat body a mass of corruption. Mervyn Peake would, of course, be capable of turning Treasure Island into a sort of Greeneland; but in other pictures—notably the first sight of Treasure Island in the moonlight, or Jim Hawkins aloft during his struggle with Hands—he admirably catches the enthusiasm, the boyish high spirits of the story. Children given this *Treasure Island* will certainly be crying Sacrilege at the illustrators of the 1980's. So, perhaps, will those who see *Huckleberry Finn* first through Edward Burra's eyes. There is a good deal in his drawings that may not be immediately appreciated by children: his rather sophisticated distortions occasionally make it difficult to see what is happening in the picture. In his choice of scenes to illustrate, he has relied on the drama of character as much as on the drama of incident: and why shouldn't he, for (as Walter Allen reminds us in his penetrating introduction to this edition) *Huckleberry Finn* is also a book for grown-ups. But there is mystery in Burra's twisted roots and snags, infinite possibilities in his sweeping, curving river, and the utmost drama in the steamboat ramming the raft. That picture won't easily be painted over in the mind's gallery.

With *The Essential Uncle Remus*, my quarrel is with the text and not at all with the illustrations—which are the original ones by Arthur Cross and greatly preferable to those I had hitherto known, in which Brer Rabbit showed a regrettable likeness to the bunnies on baby's cots and pots. Sixty stories have been chosen from J. C. Harris's seven Uncle Remus books, arranged in order, as the author intended, to bring out the stages of the Rabbit's triumph that embodied the wishful fantasies of the Negro. But "Harris's original text," the present editors coolly proceed, "has been condensed on occasion." And at the expense of Uncle Remus himself. Number 21 in this collection, *Lounging 'Round and Suffering* (a new title which rather takes away from the impact of the phrase in the text) begins briskly: "One day Brer Fox strike up wid Brer Tarrypin." But the usual version (calling it *Mr. Fox Tackles Old Man Tarrypin*) begins: "One day", said Uncle Remus, sharpening his knife on the palm of his hand—"One day Brer Fox strike up wid . . . . etc." How could the present editors leave out a phrase that establishes a character like "sharpening his knife on the palm of his hand"? Or the ending, which has been quite chopped off—

> "Was he drowned, Uncle Remus?" "Who, Ole Man Tarrypin? Is you drowndid, w'en yo' Ma tucks you in de bed?" "Well, no," replied the little boy dubiously. "Ole Man Tarrypin wuz at home, I tell you, honey. Kerblinkity-blunk!"

The Uncle Remus books are not only stories about animals, they are the story of an old negro telling a white child stories about animals. The Negro's own situation counterpoints the fables; and to mutilate it or restrict it is to rob Brer Rabbit of

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Company Meeting

Barclays Bank (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas)

Very Liquid Position

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

THE 24th Ordinary general meeting of Barclays Bank (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas) will be held in London on Dec. 28.

The following are extracts from the statement by the chairman, Mr. J. S. Crossley, which has been circulated with the report and accounts for the year to September 30, 1949:—

"We shall propose that the dividend of last year be repeated; as the figures show, it now enjoys the protection of a good margin. We are transferring £200,000 out of profits to the bank's reserve fund, bringing this up to the figure of £8 million, and £150,000 is being applied in writing down the premium on the new capital subscribed for the Development Corporation, which was issued at a premium of 50 per cent.

"Turning to the balance sheet, the most striking change is the sharp reduction shown in our deposits. On the assets side advances to customers remain at much the same figure as last year, and, consequently, represent a substantially higher proportion of our resources. They slightly exceed the total of our investments so that the ratios of these items to our total deposits now stand at 30.88 per cent. and 29.02 per cent. respectively.

"Although cash has fallen sharply to 20.27 per cent., the balance sheet still shows a very liquid position, more especially since under the heading of bills discounted we hold over £42 million of Treasury Bills of the British and South African Governments, and British Exchequer Bonds maturing early in 1950.

INVESTMENTS

"The investments, the second largest item in our assets, stand at £99,832,156 and include for the first time our shareholding in the National Finance Corporation of South Africa. Having in mind the sharp fall which took place in gilt-edged securities during the year under review, stockholders will wish to know how the Bank has been affected. Although the depreciation in values that we have experienced has been severe it would undoubtedly have been greater had our investments not been almost entirely confined to those Government securities which have a definite date for redemption, and for the most part to those which are of short or medium term. This policy which we have been following for some time past can, I think, be said to have proved its worth under existing conditions. Our investments amounting to £99,832,156 appear in the balance sheet at under cost and below market value.

"The shrinkage in our deposits is notable for being the first decline of any importance in this figure to be recorded since this bank was formed in 1925. The fall has taken place almost entirely in South Africa."

"Mummie I've been promoted!"

"I'm a secretary! To a Director too! You should have seen the other girls' faces."

"I'm so glad, Patricia. But don't gloat over the other girls, dear, you've had more chance . . . more training."

"I know, mummie, thanks to you. And how grateful I am that you sent me to The Langham. I loved it there . . . and now your career girl is going places . . . you watch."

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character and significance. He then becomes merely a rabbit and not an archetype.

Mervyn Peake has also done seven drawings for the Zodiac *Ancient Mariner*, a harder task than *Treasure Island*, for here the illustrator competes with the strong mental picture the poet's words and images have evoked; but I think he has been successful. Peake's Ancient Mariner himself may well, for many readers, replace the shadowy creature of their inward eyes. As they contain the original, the only true illustrations, the Zodiac *Lear's Nonsense Songs* need no comment, except that they make a wonderful cheap present for child or adult. And so do the Enid Marx illustrated *Nursery Rhymes*, a straightforward reprint of one of the best and prettiest collections available.

JANET ADAM SMITH

WHEELS AND AMPS

The Boys' Book of Science and Invention. *Evans.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Building a House. By RICHARD LEACROFT. *Puffin.* 1*s.* 6*d.*

Electric Models from Odds and Ends. By D. C. GOHM and E. PATTERSON. *Puffin.* 1*s.* 6*d.*

British Railways for Boys. By CECIL J. ALLEN. *English University Press.* 5*s.*

British Ships and Shipping. By PETER DUFF. *Harrap.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Motor Age. By K. G. FENELON. *Common Ground Books.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

A Great Engineer: I. K. Brunel. By S. M. TOYNE. *Common Ground Books.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

Adventure and Discovery No. 4. *Cape.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Discovery, or The Spirit and Service of Science. By Sir RICHARD GREGORY. *Puffin.* 1*s.* 6*d.*

These nine books reveal both the strong technological bias of our time and the extraordinary precocity of boys in mechanical things. To the adult, overwhelmed by the onward rush of science, the range of subjects so glibly covered is startling. The foundations for the future technician (as so many boys, it seems, must see themselves) are most abundantly, if somewhat unevenly, laid. For, I suspect, the success and usefulness of these books from the boys' point of view depends, not only on how skilfully they blend entertainment and information, as all do, but also on their basic accuracy. Boys are uncommonly quick at spotting errors of fact and inadequacies of explanation. So books of this sort should be written by experts, and aimed at a definite age-group. The degree of simplification and the amount of background provided should be consistent throughout the book.

These are minimum requirements. *The Boys' Book of Science and Invention* falls somewhat short of them. The most lavishly produced of these volumes (the photographs are a delight), it is the least consistent in aim and presentation. With a format suitable for five-year-olds, it gives, for instance, a detailed explanation of the superhet radio receiver so worded that it would confuse an experienced radio engineer.

In contrast, Richard Leacroft's simple and concise text in *Building a House* combines with equally lucid and ingenious coloured illustrations to produce a short book that should both fascinate the seven- to twelve-year-olds and provide useful information for their less knowledgeable householding parents. Equally satisfactory is *Electric Models from Odds and Ends*, in the same series, with its detailed, accurate, and easy-to-follow plans of model electric signals, buzzers, telephones, and motors. All should really work and can be made from the simplest "odds and ends". Both these books are cheap and exciting stocking-fillers, but they will go on giving pleasure long after Christmas is over.

For older boys, who are already becoming specialists in their enthusiasms, both *British Railways for Boys* and *British Ships and Shipping*, are very suitable. Devoting themselves to a single subject and with a minimum of historical introduction, they find space for a host of intricate, intriguing, and accurate details and sidelights amidst the main course of their narrative. The illustrations, in the railway book especially, are excellent and abundant. The pictures are also good in the two Common Ground Book pamphlets, *The Motor Age*, and the lovely little biography of *A Great Engineer: I. K. Brunel*.

Adventure and Discovery for Boys and Girls No. 4, and Sir Richard Gregory's *Discovery*, have a wider scope. The explanation of, say, Radar, in the first is as clear and accurate as that in *The Boys' Book of Science and Invention* is confused. But *Adventure and Discovery* also roams happily amidst such diverse subjects as the Bayeux tapestry, simple physiology, the work of P.R.O.s, psychic research, selective breeding, and the cocoa bean, with an adventure story or two for good measure. *Discovery*, with its sub-title, "The Spirit and Service of Science," is for the more serious. Sir Richard Gregory deals only with the physical sciences, pure and applied, but supplies a firm philosophical background. This introduction to scientific thought and method will be exciting and invaluable to schoolboys struggling through the early years of a science course and can also be read, with much pleasure and profit, by adults who never were quite sure, and have now entirely forgotten, just what Newton was supposed to have deduced from the fall of that probably apocryphal apple. The publishers are to be congratulated on making available so cheaply this new and revised edition of a standard work.

F. C. ARNAUD

THE WAGS

Versus. By OGDEN NASH. *Dent.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

That's Me All Over. By CORNELIA OTIS SKINNER. *Constable.* 10*s.*

Anything For A Laugh. Edited by BENNETT CERF. *Dobson.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Best Of Times. By LUDWIG BEMELMANS. *Cresset Press.* 18*s.*

Wit and Humour. Chosen and presented by MICHAEL BARSLEY. *Phoenix House.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Buffers End. By EMETT. *Faber.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Drayneflete Revealed. By OSBERT LANCASTER. *Murray.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

There is a story, by O. Henry I fancy, of a professional humorist who finds refuge from his intolerable existence only in the parlour of the local undertaker. I must confess that a batch of purposefully comic books, so many literary red noses, literary hats too small, literary trousers patched and elephantine, leaves behind it a tremulous yearning for Mauriac's *Thérèse* or the more nightmarish moments of Canetti's *Auto-Da-Fé*.

The besetting fault of humorists—or at least of those here represented—is that they try too hard to be funny. The fault, of course, lies much with the public and with us critics in particular. Upon tragedians we are hard enough after all. If anguish and horror do not grow naturally from the story, we straightway level accusations of effects strained after. Think only of the ridicule we heap upon Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* or upon the *Cenci*. But so frightened are we of being thought solemn, slow to see the point, that we submit to a tyranny from the wags such as we would never stomach from "serious" writers.

Take Ogden Nash for instance. His *Versus* inspire a fashion. The very mention of his name is supposed to let loose a laugh. I remember laughing myself at his *First Families of Virginia, Move Over*, not alas! included in the present collection. His *Don't Look Now, But Your Noblesse Oblige is Showing* deserves at least a smile—on the whole his titles promise more than his rhymes can give; while to be fair his Fifth Limick caused me unalloyed pleasure:

A young flirt of Ceylon,
Who led the boys on,
Playing Follow the Leda
Succumbed to a swan.

Yet on the whole his frantic efforts to amuse end by causing nothing but embarrassment.

An even more lamentable offender is Miss Cornelia Otis Skinner. Here we have the larks of the fashion magazine, the red nose worn at the angle authorised by the Autumn Collections, Louis heels to tap emphasis upon her patter. The consequence is rather what one would expect, were Jack Benny to become editor of *Harper's Bazaar*. There is the true Benny self-depreciation. Miss Skinner can't skate, Miss Skinner can't ride, can't speak Russian. But Goodness how chic, Goodness how gay are her incompetences! Still, to be fair once again, her Hemingway parody *For Whom The Gong Sounds*, is not without its charms.

Mr. Bennett Cerf is well enough known in America for Ogden Nash, apparently, to dislike him. Fear, however, rather than dislike, is the sentiment which Mr. Cerf is most likely to inspire. For he is the Funny Man of the Party, the bore from whose button-holing you cannot escape because it is a non-corridor train. "Listen, have you heard this one? It'll slaughter you!" But the comforting death so often promised never comes; meanwhile the grip is steadily tightening upon your lapel . . .

Bemelmans's new book is an entirely different matter. Though Bemelmans at times is capable of the airiest nonsense—who will forget his *Nigger of the Splendide* or his parody of semi-pornography in *Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep*—he is not primarily a humorist. Instead he is a writer of considerable technical skill, almost the only genuine writer to be considered in this batch. His humour is born of a point of view

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rather than a red nose, and consequently can turn in a flash to tragedy. His present book is a typical instance. A record of a journey to Western Europe some three years ago, it starts off blithely enough, railing at the exasperations of air travel, or recounting in a manner not too redolent of *La Maison Tellier* the last banquet in the old brothel before the Parisian police close it. Gaiety is his travelling companion as far as Munich. Then suddenly he treats us to some of the most horrifying accounts of Nazi concentration camps that we have heard for a long while; while his story of the Bavarian ticket collector's brutality to him so long as he took Bemelmans for a civilian compatriot, and his servility when he learned his mistake, should be a lesson to anyone who believes that Germany is being "democratised" and is now ripe to be given back her army. *The Best Of Times* may have its moments of tedium; Bemelmans has made a mistake in describing discomforts that no longer exist. Nothing is so remote as the day before yesterday. Nevertheless, here is a book to buy, but not for its comedy.

Michael Barsley's miscellany of recent English humour appears, despite his protestations, to be touched by an unnecessary sense of inferiority. Though his quotation from *Vile Bodies* omits the climax of the joke—the cheque which the film-struck Col. Blount gives Adam Symes for £1,000, you will remember, was signed Charles Chaplin—Waugh stands out as a humorist far more accomplished than any writer in America with the possible exception of Thurber. Betjeman's poems, though one may regret no mention of Miss Hunter-Dunn in the selection, are incomparable; while Arthur Marshall's *Schoolgirls' Stories* and Miss Laski's *Cheap Clothes For Fat Old Women* (both of which originally appeared in these pages) continue to delight. I wish I could say the same of Brahms and Simon's *No Bed For Bacon*, or the famous cricket match from the late A. G. Macdonnell's *England, Their England*. On the whole disappointing.

The world which Emett's drawings conjure up is so particular and so haunting, I can well believe that many must shrink back from it. I will waste no time in trying to allay their misgiving. I will merely recommend to his admirers this new book with the assurance that the fantasy remains as disquieting as ever.

In *Drayneflete Revealed* Mr. Osbert Lancaster returns to the quarry from which *Pelvis Bay* was built. No doubt there is something in the theory that a joke repeated is doubly funny. No doubt, too, Mr. Lancaster is a witty draughtsman, while his parody in this new work of the Augustan poetic manner is not without its felicities. But on the whole his text is unworthy of his plates. The truth is, he is too purposefully droll, too much the Cornelia Otis Skinner of this island: the eye flashes, the moustache twirls, by its change of tone the voice announces the joke's majestic approach; and what follows this elaborate overture, a cherished nursery joke at which I suppose one laughs for old time's sake.

SIMON HARCOURT-SMITH

The Building of Satellite Towns. By C. B. PURDOM. *Dent.* 50*s.*

This rather unattractive title does less than justice to what is really three books in one on the constructive theme of planning towns to fit social life instead of the converse. Mr. Purdom starts off with a short account of the general conception of town planning, particularly of garden cities. The heart of the book, and three-fifths of its bulk, however, consists of consecutive histories of the planning and development of Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City, admirably illustrated to show their varied aspects of residential, industrial, commercial and social life, and very fully annotated to explain the problems involved in building a completely new community. The last section of the book is devoted to a general discussion of the practical questions which arise in the building of new towns, especially those acting as satellites to overcrowded cities. A useful appendix contains the full text of the New Towns Act, 1946, and some extracts from the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947. Having taken an active part in the creation of Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City, Mr. Purdom can speak with intimate knowledge, and the data he presents should be of great value in any future projects. He is less authoritative on some of the larger political and economic questions which are involved in constructive town planning, and both he and Sir Theodore Chambers, who contributes a foreword, somewhat mar the objective character of the book by their disgruntlement at Welwyn Garden City Ltd. being taken over by the new Development Corporation. The book is expensive but it should be a valuable source of reliable data and ideas both for public libraries and for the members and staffs of development corporations.

Camera in Paris. By BRASSAI. *Focal Press.* 15*s.* 6*d.*

Many will remember the magnificent photographs by Brassai in his album *Paris de Nuit*, while no reader of *Minotaure* or pre-war *Verve* will have forgotten his work, always more vivid and less affected than anybody else's. His effects were never tainted with artiness, nor did they degenerate into sensationalism. It was journalism at its best. The diversities of humanity—window-shoppers, children, fat tarts, debutantes at a ball, the homeward rush of traffic, beggars, lovers—attracted him most as subject-matter. He has always been supremely adept at extracting the salty mites of truth, at pouncing accurately on telling moments. Yet he is never fake realist and only seldom sentimental; he keeps the eye of his camera clean, clear and candid. Sometimes this is difficult to realise, since his work has spawned so much that is poor and tiresomely mannered, and many of his inventions and felicities have become photographers' clichés. One can discern his influence on many of Marcel Carné's films (the camera work in *Les Enfants des Paradis* and *Les Portes de la Nuit*) for example. This volume shows Brassai's many qualities. Only the rather pretentious introduction is regrettable. Since it is not credited to anybody and reads like a translation or the work of a foreigner, one presumes it is by the photographer himself. Comparisons between photography and the work of Rembrandt, Goya, Daumier, Toulouse-Lautrec, Degas, Hokusai and Guys are worse than excessive; only the last is near the mark. Other photographers will welcome the lucid, technical data, all the more useful, since Brassai's equipment is modest—almost amateur.

Dante : The Divine Comedy, I : Hell. Translated by Dorothy L. Sayers. *Penguin Classics.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

The Penguin Classics, we are told, are intended to provide readers with new translations free from "the stilted, old-fashioned and otherwise un-English style which has too often been adopted by translators." Mr. Rieu's Homer was an excellent example of what such a translation should be; but already on the first page of Miss Dorothy Sayers's translation of the *Inferno* we find the noun "affright" and the line: ". . . Whose dread had pierced me to the heart-root deep." (Dante, incidentally, wrote no more than: "Which had pierced my heart with fear"). Elsewhere, there are such phrases as "o'er that bloat face," "with all their fangs a-gloat" and "signal flares a-brandish." Byron's version of the Paolo and Francesca episode sounds a good deal more "modern" than that by Miss Sayers, though he too kept to the difficult *terza rima* of the original; besides, Miss Sayers's last line is misleading: "And, as a dead man falling, down I fell." Instead of making Dante's thought more accessible to the contemporary English reader, Miss Sayers has succeeded only in obscuring it:

> "Go to," said he, "hast thou forgot thy learning,
> Which hath it: The more perfect, the more keen,
> Whether for pleasure's or for pain's discerning."

Anyone who can understand those lines without referring to the original or to a different translation has the reviewer's respect; the lines mean: "Return to your science which tells you that the nearer a thing is to perfection the more it feels pleasure and pain." The quality of the verse is unequal; in places it attains something of the grandeur of the original, but the impurity of the language used by Miss Sayers soon destroys the effect.

Winter Trees and Tones. By BERTRAM LLOYD. *Riverside Press.* 2*s.* 9*d.*

Bertram Lloyd, who died in 1944, was a true lover of the English countryside. As a young Socialist he had lived and worked at Toynbee Hall, was a member of the original Humanitarian League and a close friend of Henry Salt. As pamphleteer and anthologist he was inspired by the love of his fellow men, yet his friends testify that he was at his best in the fields. Here is printed for the first time Lloyd's essay on Winter Trees. His deep feeling for the country and its animals is apparent as is his intimate knowledge of natural history. This graceful tribute to his memory contains a foreword by his friend Samuel Looker.

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Company Meeting

GREAT UNIVERSAL STORES

RECORD TURNOVER & PROFIT

THE thirty-first ordinary general meeting of The Great Universal Stores, Ltd., was held on December 5th in London, Mr. Isaac Wolfson (chairman and managing director) presiding.

The following is an extract from his circulated statement:—

"The year under review has been a record one in the history of the group both as to turnover and profit. The results disclosed have been brought about solely through a substantial increase in the volume of business transacted by the group, having suitable stocks available, and as a result of sound planning in previous years.

"The consolidated trading profit of £4,576,290, which is an increase of £1,647,842 over the previous year, will, I feel sure, give to stockholders every satisfaction. To the above-mentioned trading profit must be added £64,905 in respect of dividends from trade investments and sundry items receivable, making a total revenue of £4,641,195. From this has been deducted £332,517 for depreciation, £41,539 for auditors' remuneration of the group, £370,013 for interest paid, and £364,497 for the proportion of profits relating to outside shareholders of subsidiary companies.

"This leaves a resultant balance of £3,532,629, out of which taxation takes the substantial sum of £2,091,760.

"Goodwill written off is £439,166. Transfers to reserves are £550,980. Dividends of the parent company take £346,871 net, and the amount carried forward to the profit and loss account is increased by £103,852.

"Total net assets (deducting £1,395,701 reserve for future income tax) amount to £17,443,476, of which £7,741,362 is attributable to outside shareholders in subsidiary companies, leaving £9,702,114 as the net asset value of The Great Universal Stores stockholders. Turnover of the group for the current year is in excess of last year, and I anticipate that profits for this year will be no less than those for the year now under review.

"The report and accounts were adopted."